MARVEL

the AMAZING SPIDER-GIRL®

MIND GAMES

TOM DEFALCO • RON FRENZ

the AMAZING SPIDER-GIRL

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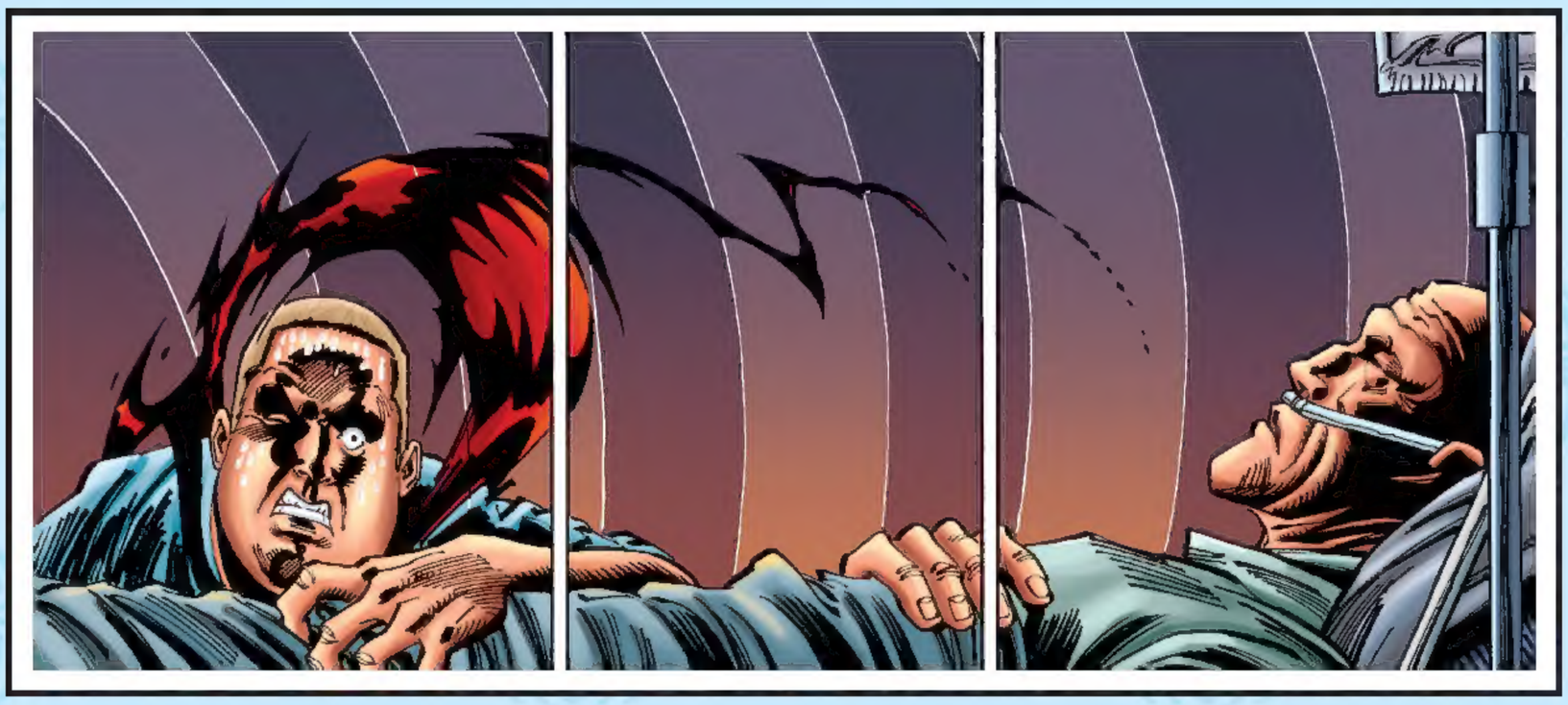
#13

#13
ZOMBIE VARIANT BY/ARTHUR SUYDAM

The daughter of Spider-Man, May "Mayday" Parker, has inherited her father's amazing powers. Possessing the proportionate strength, speed and agility of a spider, as well as the ability to cling to walls, she now follows in his web-lines.

the AMAZING SPIDER-GIRL

With the aid of the **Black Tarantula**, the current Kingpin of crime, **Spider-Girl** prevents the **Hobgoblin** from obtaining a computer disk that could help him seize control of the underworld.



The **Carnage Symbiote** later takes control of a former classmate, but Spider-Girl destroys it before **Moose Mansfield** can infect his father in a desperate attempt to cure the man's cancer.

When her father freezes during the battle, Spider-Girl employs a sonic blaster to save her baby brother from Carnage, but the discharge affects the baby's hearing.

I, HOBGOBLIN!

My name is Roderick Kingsley, although I am far better known as the Hobgoblin.

Society has labeled me a criminal.

I prefer to think of myself as a simple entrepreneur whose primary business is the pursuit of power.

I intend to become the new, undisputed Kingpin of Crime.

To accomplish my goal, I must first dispose of the current ruler-- the Black Tarantula.

--and his toady, the always annoying Spider-Girl.

The process is finally complete, Roderick.

I still don't understand why you've been undergoing these treatments for the past few weeks.

I needed to prepare for the next phase of my war against the *Tarantula* and *Spider-Girl*, Daniel--

--so I employed the *Winkler Device* to precondition my mind and reinforce my defenses against mental manipulation.

I intend to secure the services of a powerful new associate--

--and he may *balk* at the idea of entering my employ.

Why don't you just quit while you're ahead and forget this stupid war?

You have more than enough money to live comfortably for the rest of your life.

It's hard to believe that Daniel and I were conceived in the same womb.

Though we once looked exactly alike, the years haven't been as kind to him--

--and our personalities were never similar.

This *isn't* about money.

You want revenge on *Spider-Girl*, don't you?

That woman deliberately interfered with my affairs on more than one occasion.

I'll never be safe until she's destroyed.

It's obvious that she's determined to bring me down--

"--and is probably out *hunting* for me at this very instant."

My name is *May "Mayday" Parker* and I am the daughter of *Spider-Man.*

I'm supposed be a *hero* who's carrying on my dad's legacy.

CLAP! CLAP!

It's my job to defend the innocent and protect the helpless.

Hey, Benjy!

Turn around, Benjy-boy.

Some hero I've turned out to be.

C-can you hear me, Benjy?

Instead of protecting my baby brother, I may have accidentally destroyed his hearing.

Oh, Benjy!

I...I'm so very *sorry.*

Yeah, I did it to save him from being a monster--

--but that's no consolation.

A real hero would have found a way to keep him from harm.

This is all my fault-- *mine and mine alone!*

May--?

You all right, hotshot?

We need to take the baby to the doctor.

He wants to run more tests.

Oh, Mom! Benjy will never forgive me for what I've done.

You aren't to blame, hon. You didn't do anything wrong.

You saved your brother's life...and the lives of countless others.

Poor May doesn't realize that I'm the one who's really responsible for this tragedy.

I'm convinced this hearing loss is only temporary. Benjamin will be just fine.

Isn't that right, Peter?

Uhhh... sure!

You listen to your mother. You shouldn't feel guilty.

I should have been the one who pulled the trigger.

If I had only acted, May would be spared this heartache.

I...I'll put the baby in the car.

My parents may sound supportive--

--but Dad can't even look me in the eye.

You go to school and try to relax.

We'll call you if the doctor has any definitive news.

KLIK!

W-what are you doing, Roderick?

The answer should be obvious, Daniel.

Even to someone as observant as you.

The authorities are currently attempting to apprehend *Roderick* Kingsley.

Daniel, however, is free to roam about the country.

My new associate is presently in *Las Vegas.*

I--*actually* ***you***--have a reservation on an 11:15 flight.

Y-you're planning to impersonate me?

What if someone sees through your disguise and arrests you?

That's a risk I'm willing to take.

You often pretended to be me in the old days and no one was the wiser.

Just to be on the safe side, I'll take extra pains to appear to be an unintelligent, sniveling, weak-willed coward.

Ha! You always did have a great sense of humor, Roderick.

I'm glad you think so.

Feel free to take full advantage of these facilities while I'm away.

I've restocked the pantry and put clean sheets on the guest room cot.

Thanks anyway, but I plan to head back to my apartment later.

That reminds me...

I'm going to need your identification to get past airport security.

You might as well give me your entire wallet.

W-what if I need it?

DK

Trust me, you *won't.*

I understand, Roderick.

The authorities will get suspicious if there are two Daniels running around.

You can count on me to keep a low profile while you're away.

I *know* you will, Daniel.

SLAMMMM!

KLIKT!

MIDTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

ELECTION DAY

Ben's life isn't the only one I may have ruined.

There's a good chance that Moose's dad will die because of me.

Why is everyone-- *ohmigosh!*

With all the excitement, I forgot today's the election for Student Council.

Would you like a "*Support Simone*" button, Terry?

Already have *plenty*, Simone.

How about you, Parker?

Ready to join the winning team?

Good luck with the election, Simone.

You're going to need it.

I'm not the only one.

Have you talked to your boyfriend today?

Gene? Nope, haven't seen him.

Then I guess you haven't finalized your plans for the big dance.

No, not that it's any of your business.

She couldn't make me more upset than I already am.

Simone's just wasting her breath today.

Uh-oh! There's ***Davida.*** Things have been a little tense between us ever since I ditched the election and she had to take my place.

I suppose I could just quietly slip out, but she looks like she could use a friend...

Rehearsing your acceptance speech?

Please remember to thank all the little people.

Simone's still working the halls. I wouldn't count on a gracious concession.

Hey, Mayday...

Hate to admit it, but I'm kind of freaked.

Playing the upbeat campaign manager is a lot easier than sweating out the election results as a candidate.

I'm almost hoping Simone wins.

Then you're going to be very disappointed.

How you doing, girl?

You really think I have a chance?

Lady, we're talking landslide.

Time to ***cowgirl up*** and face the voters.

I thought the expression was "*cowboy up!*"

Why should they have all the fun?

Good point! Do I look like I'm projecting confidence?

Yeah...*for someone about to face a* ***firing squad!***

High school voters? Firing squad? Not much difference. Let's go ruin Simone's day.

Have you seen ***Courtney*** this morning?

She took a sick day because she's so worried about ***Moose.***

He's still in police custody, but no one will tell her where he's being held.

I can guess a likely spot--

--and I'll look into at lunchtime.

She thinks she's so clever.

So cunning!

WELCOME TO Fabulous LAS VEGAS NEVADA

Her father--if that is their true relationship--was a major thorn in my side when I first became the Hobgoblin.

Spider-Girl is already shaping up to be an even greater threat.

Spider-Man's annoying puns and witless jokes were obviously used to cover his fears and insecurities.

Spider-Girl doesn't rely on such crutches.

She seems a lot more confident and capable.

From the way she comports herself, I assume she's in her early to mid-twenties... although she could be older.

I never did manage to ascertain Spider-Man's true age.

I'm also curious about her connection to the Black Tarantula.

Are they merely business associates?

Or are they lovers?

MAXIM

How may I serve you today?

I believe a Mr. Leonard Groote is staying in your penthouse.

It is against hotel policy to discuss our guests, sir.

A policy I heartily endorse, my good man. We won't discuss Mr. Groote...but I would like to see him.

In that case, you'll need a special elevator key to reach the penthouse.

Leonard Groote is one of Hollywood's bad boys.

Luckily for him, his hits have managed to out-number his scandals.

Although I understand the margin is growing slimmer.

Interesting! I wonder how these young ladies would react if they could see this scene through my eyes.

But then I'd have to expose them all to the Winkler Device.

Mr. Groote, I wonder if I could have a moment of your time.

You with the hotel, Dad?

Listen, I turned down the music twice already and the other security guy said we were cool.

I couldn't care less about your music.

I've come to discuss a gentleman by the name of William Turner.

Give me a minute, girls. I need to talk to this guy.

Whatever you say, Leo.

We can have some privacy in the bedroom.

Take off, Clarice! I need the room.

B-but, Leonard--!

I said SCRAM!

What's your story, dude?

I never heard of anyone named Turner.

If that's the case, you seem to be over-acting.

Another explanation could be that you are an imposter--

--and the real Leonard Groote is secretly in a rehab center in the south of France.

That's a LIE!

Is it?

I am not here to spoil your fun, ***Mr. Turner,*** or should I call you--

--Mindworm?

H-how are you able to pierce my psychic projection?

That is my secret. I know all about your ability to feed off psychic energy--

--and employ it to affect emotions and cast illusions.

Good for you, smart guy! ***Congratulations!*** You've done your homework.

I've still got the only gun in the room--

--so start talking about ***you!***

I am ***Roderick Kingsley,*** the ***Hobgoblin.***

I have come to offer you a business proposition--

--that will make us both ***richer*** and more ***powerful*** than you ever dreamed possible!

=Sigh= I've been here before.

I sleepwalk through my morning classes, haunted by my current crises.

As soon as the lunch bell rings, I head for the nearest stairway.

Hey, May!

I duck inside--

--and immediately head for the roof.

Hold up, May! We gotta...

How'd she disappear so fast?

She must have headed down to the cafeteria.

Oh, man! No one will ever believe that *Gene Thompson* can't keep up with a girl.

I assume the authorities are still holding *Moose*--

--to make absolutely certain he's no longer infected by the *Carnage symbiote.*

While they could be keeping him anywhere--

--there's a certain top-secret debriefing facility that immediately springs to mind.

Oh, no!

What are you doing here?

I've come to check on *Moose Mansfield.*

I got a psychic flash that he's here.

I...I wasn't aware you had psychic powers, Spider-Girl.

She doesn't, Weadon. She's pulling your chain again.

Well-- ÷*harumph*÷ I am not at liberty to discuss anyone who may or may not be in government custody.

My spider senses can pierce through your bureaucratic gobbledygook.

He *is* here and I want to see him.

Kaine, can she really--

Again... *no.*

But she did stop Carnage... rescue Mansfield... and save your career.

I'd say you owe her.

÷*sigh*÷

All right!

I suppose I can bend the rules this once...

Just to square things between us.

Sounds like an even exchange.

In case you're wondering, the scientists have already cleared Mansfield.

Since we're not pressing any charges against him, he'll be released as soon as we can process his paperwork.

You have a visitor, young man.

W-what's *she* doing here?

I just came to see how they're treating you.

Like an *animal* in the zoo, not that it's any of your business.

Get out of my sight!

MURDERER!

My dad's gonna die because of YOU!

I may be mistaken, but I don't think the lad's a fan of your work.

Weadon... just *shut up!*

C'mon on, kid! This ain't doing anybody any good.

You can't doubt yourself, Spider-Girl.

You did the right thing.

Carnage would have turned the boy's father into another monster.

No one would want to live like that.

Yeah, I guess...

See you around, Kaine.

I race to my webs--

--and I'm already a few blocks away when the tears start to fall.

Moose used to be my biggest fan.

He *hates* me now--

--and I can't *blame* him.

My mask is a soggy mess by the time I reach *Midtown High.*

MIDTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

I hit the ladies' for a quick face wash and some strategic makeup and then...

Isn't it *great,* May?

Isn't *what* great, *Brianna?*

Davida Kirby won the election. She's our new president!

Just think! It could have been *you* if you hadn't dropped out.

And the hits just keep on coming!

But Davida will make a much better president than I ever would.

She deserves this!

I'm happy for her.

Of course, I could use a little cheering up myself--

--and I know just the man who can do it.

Hey, Wes... you got a moment?

Always for you, Parker.

What do you need?

Any chance you've seen *Gene Thompson* in your travels?

Oh...*ummm...* he was down in the cafeteria earlier, but I'm sure he's gone by now.

It's a place to look.

Thanks.

Yeah... sure.

How did you ever find me?

I employ a network of informants.

They clued me in to your mutant abilities and your fondness for the celebrity life-style.

My impersonations are relatively harmless.

I give the girls great memories and stiff a few luxury hotels.

It's a good life. Why should I endanger it by getting involved with you?

Because I can help you attain *real power* and *riches.*

You would no longer have to *borrow* them from others.

Okay, you have my interest.

Tell me more about this so-called *Spider-Girl...*

Make no mistake about it--*she is a cunning and ruthless adversary!*

She has somehow convinced the entire city of New York that she is a *hero.*

The truth is she secretly works for the *Black Tarantula,* a South American gangster who currently reigns over the independent crime-lords.

I believe that she's a master manipulator--

"--and may even be his chief *assassin!*"

All hail the chief!

Way to go, Madam President.

Can you believe it, May?

We did it! We really did it!

You did it, Davida.

I was afraid to admit how much I wanted this, May.

I...I'm sorry for giving you such a hard time about everything.

Bygones!

Besides, I probably owe you the apologies.

So--?!

What's the first order of business and how can I help?

Well, I could probably use some assistance for the big dance.

Simone and her crowd were supposed to be in charge of the decoration committee.

I'm not sure I can count on her best effort anymore.

Sign me up!

I'm an ace when it comes to hanging banners and blowing up balloons.

Speaking of the dance, I'd better find Gene.

We need to work out some details...

All right...

I'm in.

I assume we'll split the profits 50/50.

Absolutely.

You have my word of honor.

I'll meet you in New York in a couple of days.

I have to tie up some loose ends here.

I'll make all the appropriate arrangements.

Trust me, you won't regret this decision.

Return to your party and enjoy yourself, my friend.

We're going to change the entire underworld.

Turner is even more naïve than I thought.

The fool actually believes that we will be equal partners.

I'm afraid this arrangement was only designed to benefit the Hobgoblin.

TAXI

MAXIM

Gene! I've been looking all over for you.

How nice! I suppose I should feel honored.

Wha--is something bothering you?

You mean aside from the fact that you completely ignored me earlier--

--and ditched me in the stairwell?

I'm tired of the way you treat me.

Our relationship is too one-sided.

You only want to hang with me when it's convenient for *you.*

I deserve better.

W-what are you *saying?!*

Isn't it obvious? I hate to admit it, but you just don't seem to care as deeply for me as I do for you.

You expect me to be there whenever you want--to prop you up whenever you're feeling down!

What about me? When have you ever been there for me?

When was the last time you came to football practice or even attended one of my games?

How many dates have you broken?

Or been too busy to take my calls?

W-we can work it out, Gene.

I...I'm sure we can.

Why bother?

I would have done anything for you, but you're just not that into me.

I can't take it anymore, May.

It's *over.*

We're *done.*

Gene, *please...*

I'm *sorry,* May.

I've had enough.

And so it begins...

I am finally prepared to launch an all-out assault against the **Black Tarantula** and **Spider-Girl**.

I only hope I haven't delayed too long.

They obviously know I'm coming for them.

I must assume that they are fully prepared to destroy me.

The advantage is certainly theirs, but I am a patient man.

I will eventually discover their **vulnerabilities**--

--and ATTACK when they least expect it!

#14

THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY!

My name is **Roderick Kingsley**, although I am far better known as the **Hobgoblin.**

Like most successful entrepreneurs, I adhere to a strict and simple **business plan--**

--that employs crime to achieve **wealth, power** and **prestige.**

My long-term goal is to seize control of the **underworld** and become the new, undisputed **Kingpin of Crime.**

But first, I must eliminate the current ruler, a South American mobster named the **Black Tarantula--**

--which is why I have sought this hidden temple.

I-it's the HOBGOBLIN!

We must protect the HIGH PRIESTESS!

Interesting!

Even though you wear blindfolds, you can somehow sense my identity--

--but you have totally misinterpreted my intentions.

I am not here to harm any of you.

I only wish to consult your *oracle.*

Where is she?

Where is MADAME WEB?

I am afraid she is no longer with us.

While my humble psychic powers pale before hers, I now sit upon her *Chair of Clairvoyance.*

I sense that you have come in search of knowledge.

You seek a way to destroy the great enemy-- *he who bears the curse of the* Black Tarantula.

H-how did you--?

I cannot explain how my power works.

I only know that it does.

You are in luck, Hobgoblin.

My cult has its own reasons to hate the *Tarantula.*

But he is not the only one you wish dead.

Now that you mention it, there *is* someone else.

A most troublesome insect...

My name is *May "Mayday" Parker* and I am the daughter of *Spider-Man.*

I'm also the one who may have accidentally destroyed my baby brother's hearing.

Hey, Benjy-boy! I've got your favorite juice here...

Benjy--?!

Ben--?!

Don't tell me you managed to climb out of your playpen and--

POT!

Ben--?

Please tell me I'm *hallucinating!*

This *can't* be real!

My spider-powers didn't emerge until I was well into my teens.

Ben's barely a toddler and he's already crawling the walls.

Oh, no! Is it possible that his recent exposure to the ***Carnage symbiote*** has somehow jump-started his abilities?

Are you ready for a glorious ***Saturday,*** May?

Uhhh, Mom...

We may have a *problem* here.

I don't think so, hon!

Nothing can possibly ruin this weekend.

Wanna bet?

Your father has the next two days off, and we're taking the baby to the zoo.

And I believe you're going shopping with Davida.

B-but--

No ***buts*** about it, kiddo! We've been through too much grief recently.

We deserve a break.

We're going to live like a nice normal family--

--and not mention any ***spider stuff*** today!

Out of respect for my mom, I shut my mouth and link up with *Davida*...who, of course, knows about Ben's hearing problem.

Hey, I'm sure your little bro will be just fine.

Medical science can accomplish miracles these days.

I hope so...

By the way, *Courtney* wants us to meet her at *Moose's* later.

He has some big announcement.

How can I face *Moose*, knowing how much he hates *Spider-Girl*?

Not that I blame him! I did prevent him from saving his dad from cancer.

Of course, the cure would have transformed the man into a monster by exposing him to the *Carnage Symbiote*...

Something bothering you, May?

You know you can tell me *anything*.

Yeah, I do...

Maybe it's time I finally took Davida into my confidence and...

T-that DOG!

What are you--*oh, no!*

NO!

I-it's *Gene Thompson!*

Yeah, and it certainly didn't take your ex long to move on--*to Simone DeSantos of all people!*

Told you the guy was a total bonehead.

He'd have to be to go from *class* to *crass*.

I ought to--

Leave it alone, D!

I don't blame Gene for wanting a life.

The breakup wasn't all his fault.

He claimed I never put him first.

He was right.

My responsibilities as *Spider-Girl* always took precedence.

Ahhh, forget him!

Like my grandmother always used to say, "*A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle.*"

Says the girl who always has a new guy on her arm.

Don't be *hatin'* cause I'm *datin'*.

Can I help it if boys are dazzled by my charm, wit and beauty?

Since we're on the subject, what are your thoughts on young *Mr. Westin?*

There seems to be *something* brewing between you two.

Wes? I guess he's okay...but I... I'm just not ready to jump into another relationship yet.

Okay, as long as you know the golden rule...

Move it or lose it!

If *you're* not interested in Wes, I guess he's fair game--

--and I just might ask him out myself.

Meanwhile...

According to the legends that surround him, the *Black Tarantula* is supposed to be both *invincible* and *immortal.*

But he is more *myth* than *man.*

I...I don't understand.

Patience, my friend, and you will...

According to the stories we've managed to piece together, the first *Tarantula* appears to have been a scholar of Spanish descent.

His true name has been lost in the annals of history, but it is believed that he traveled with the famous *Marco Polo* on his first expedition to *China.*

"This scholar became enamored with the martial arts of the Far East and sought to master them.

"He even joined a cult of assassins that reputedly exists today.

"His skills eventually gained him their most valuable possession--*the secret of immortality!*

"Such is the legend.

"Alas, the truth appears to be rather more pedestrian.

"The scholar merely passed his knowledge down from father to son.

"As with many buccaneers of that era, this one secretly answered to certain Spanish nobles--

"--and was commissioned to discourage the ships of other countries from exploiting the recently discovered Americas.

"A descendant, *possibly a buccaneer who sailed the Spanish Seas,* adopted the fearsome ***tarantula*** as his family crest.

"We believe that either he--*or one of his sons*--eventually learned of a forbidden ***ritual of power*** that enhanced his physical prowess.

"He is said to have gained the strength of a thousand men and many other amazing abilities.

"With his new powers, he became virtually unstoppable--

"--and the enemies of ***Spain*** quickly grew to fear the ***Black Tarantula.***

"As his wealth increased, so did his appetites for power, riches and destruction.

"He also turned on his Spanish masters.

"This is when he began to sow the first seeds of his criminal empire.

"Instead of sending them their usual annual tribute--

"--he shipped them the torn and desecrated bodies of their own envoys.

"The *Tarantula* was now a true pirate in every sense of the word, a merciless rogue without king or country.

"Determined to punish him for his flagrant betrayal, his Spanish masters subjected others to the ***rite of power*** and hurled them against the *Tarantula*--

"--but none possessed the necessary skill or raw strength to defeat him.

"Since all men eventually die, the *Tarantula* followed the example of his scholarly ancestor--

"--and, using a mystical ritual known only to his family, passed his many skills and powers to the next generation.

"While the superstitious among us believe that the *Black Tarantula* is immortal--

"--we have determined that *'he'* is actually a series of individuals who share the same bloodline."

Admit it! You were eying those John Fluevogs.
You should have bought them.
Nothing cheers a girl like a new pair of shoes.
They really did look good.
You think I should go back for them?
Absolutely!
Okay, but there's no need for you to come.
Take your goodies home.
I'll meet you at Moose's later.
Sounds like a plan!
And, Davida... thanks!
I needed today.
Anytime, my friend.
Much as I love those Fluevogs, they can wait. I'm still worried about Ben.
But I know someone who may be able to fix his hearing problem--
--and also explain why his powers are suddenly manifesting.
I return home, dump my shopping and slip into my costume.
Then I head for the head-quarters of the world's greatest super-team-- the Fantastic Five!
I notice a repair crew on the building's roof.
A pretty common sight when you have the kind of enemies they do.
Wondering if I should have phoned ahead, I slip into a lab on an upper floor..
I figure their security system spotted and identified me while I was still a few blocks away.
I bet a reception committee is already headed my way.

But it may not be a *friendly* one.

Ohmigosh!

Who the heck are *you?*

Relax, Spider-Girl!

I don't blame you for not recognizing me...

I've *changed* since the last time we were together.

Frankie--?!

Franklin Richards--also known as ***Psilord***--is the son of ***Reed*** and ***Sue***, two of the team's founding members.

Maaan, talk about a fashion disaster. What's with the creepy new look?

Long story.

I assume this isn't a social call.

I am afraid that he is...*unreachable...* and will be for the foreseeable future.

A fact you would know if you bothered to keep up with current events.*

?!?

What do you want?

*Uhhh...*I need to talk to your dad.

*Or read the ***F5's*** recent mini-series--***Magnificent Molly.***

But you're obviously too wrapped up in yourself to care about anyone else's problems.

Hurt and more than a little puzzled by Franklin's outburst, I head back to Forest Hills.

I wish I knew what was bothering him.

He must be seriously stressed to lash out at me like that.

Although his words did hit home. Maybe I am a little too wrapped up in my own--

HELP ME-- please!

Shut your mouth, lady--

--or I'll close it PERMANENTLY!

T-take anything you want, but please don't harm my baby.

Back--

--OFF--

--YOU--

--ANIMALS!

What's wrong with you?

This is MY neighborhood!

THWIP!

No one threatens women and children here.

BOAMMM!

Wha--?!

I duck instinctively, reacting to my *spider-sense* even before I realize I'm in danger.

SPLATT!

Are you out of your ever-lovin' mind?!

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

Did you really think your stupid gun could match my reflexes?

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

You made a *fatal* mistake, mister!

YOU HEAR me?

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

A FATAL--

Whoa! WHOA! What am I doing? I need to apply the brakes and get hold of myself.

A-are you all right, lady?

I'm going to be *just fine*...thanks to you.

DO NOT PARK

There's something odd around here--

--but I can't worry about that now! I'm supposed to be meeting the gang at Moose's house.

I hear police sirens approaching.

You're out of danger now.

Yes, I am... but I doubt *you* are.

Meanwhile...

With all due respect, Priestess...

Do you seriously expect me to believe that no *Tarantula* has ever been bested?

Not at all.

Over the centuries, many have tasted defeat.

Some have even perished in combat.

Both the amazing *Spider-Man* and the teenage crime-fighter called *Araña* reportedly overpowered the father of the current *Tarantula.*

Araña?! I don't believe I'm familiar with her.

Few are.

She usually operated in the shadows and the public heard little of her exploits.

If a mere teenager can beat a *Black Tarantula,* I surely can.

What was her secret?

Alas, she took it to her grave.

Elsewhere...

I am so very *sorry*...

I never meant to put your family in danger, May.

I know, Moose.

My parents and I don't blame you for what you did while you were under the *Carnage Symbiote's* control.

H-how is little Ben?

We're not sure.

The doctors are still running tests.

So... *uhhh*...Courtney mentioned you had a big announcement?

I guess.

As you all know, my brothers, sister and I have been living in Jersey with my cousin Donna's family ever since my dad was hospitalized.

Maurice is always bragging about you guys... and I can see why.

Anyway, my Uncle Billy just got transferred to Queens so we're all moving back here.

Isn't that great?

The *greatest*, Courtney!

I hate to leave my friends back home--

--but I'm kind of anxious to see what ***Midtown High*** is really like.

You're going to love it, Donna.

Yeah, most of the kids are pretty cool...and the teachers aren't too bad, either.

I hate to bring up a touchy subject...

What's the story on your dad, Moose?

He...

He *isn't* good.

The doctors *claim* that they haven't given up hope.

But he keeps getting *weaker.*

If he dies, it'll be *Spider-Girl's* fault.

Her priorities are all messed up.

The Carnage Symbiote could have kept him *alive.*

But she was more interested in *killing* a monster--

--than *saving* an innocent life!

That's why I HATE her!

A real *hero* would have found a way to do *both!*

Something puzzles me. If *Spider-Man* fought the last *Tarantula*--

--how did his daughter become the current one's ally?

I cannot answer you.

I only know that the present *Tarantula* goes by the name of *Fabian LaMuerto*--

--and he received his power from his father, *Carlos*.

"Fabian may be the most powerful and deadly *Tarantula* of them all. He is said to have interned with the league of assassins called *The Hand*--

"--and he recently seized control of the notorious *Brotherhood of Scriers*."

With the aid of *Chesbro*, his chief retainer, he rules his ever-expanding criminal empire like a multinational conglomerate--

--and his assets include the New York underworld.

Yes, I am more than aware of that fact.

Tell me, is there any way to take him down?

There may be one...

"*The heart of the spider!*"

Is that some kind of weapon?

Where can I obtain one?

How does it work?

No one knows the true nature of the *heart.*

But it is mentioned in an ancient prophecy that's been linked to the ***Black Tarantula...***

*"Even the **tarantula** must fear, if the **heart of the spider** comes near. When the two do finally **meet, Victory** shall become **defeat.**"*

Very nice.

Instead of heavy armament, you give me bad poetry.

Thanks for nothing, Priestess.

I'm sorry you were disappointed.

More than I.

This trip might not have been a total failure.

*What if **Spider-Girl** is somehow connected to this mysterious "**heart of the spider**"?*

*Maybe she can provide me with the means to eliminate the dynasty of the **Black Tarantula.***

That was a wonderful perfor-mance--

--although I am surprised that you told him you were dead, *Araña.*

I didn't want him looking for me in his quest for "*the heart of the spider*".

Do you really think the "*heart*" exists?

Anything is possible, Miguel.

Yes, I like the idea of pitting super-criminals against other super-criminals.

It's a smarter and far more efficient way to fight crime.

"--if we accidentally put an *innocent party* at risk."

The *Hobgoblin* is very resource-ful.

He just may find it and save us the aggravation of taking the *Tarantula* off the board.

And, of course, we can always deal with Hobgoblin later.

We just have to watch carefully because it would be unconscionable--

Hey! Watch where you're-- WES?!

Where's the fire, man?

Uhhhh... sorry, May!

I...I guess I'm a little freaked...

But in a good way!

The most amazing thing just happened to me.

You going to share it voluntarily or do I have to beat it out of you?

You're not going to believe this, but I just ran into Davida Kirby--

--and she asked me OUT!

ME!!

C-congrat-ulations!

This is great news.

OH, YEAH!

She's the class president and one of the hottest girls in school.

Heck, she's...Davida Kirby!

I can't wait to tell Jimmy Yama--

--and everyone else I've ever met.

Hoo-boy!

And the hits just keep on coming...

Was the oracle helpful?

Perhaps.

She explained the *Tarantula's* history--

--and gave me a few ideas that may prove valuable.

How did things go on your end?

Very well, thank you.

Everything is *just fine.*

I managed to make contact and establish a psychic link with *Spider-Girl.*

I even *pushed* her a little.

You might want to consider a small bonus for our hired help.

The good news is that she is ripe with emotions, insecurities and guilt--

--and the *Mindworm* can easily use her own *INNER DEMONS* to destroy her.

#15

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO 10 YEARS

the AMAZING SPIDER-GIRL

Dark Destiny!

My name is *May "Mayday" Parker* and I am the daughter of *Spider-Man.*

Tomorrow is my anniversary.

Well... *kind of.*

For as long as I can remember, my parents and I have called it *"May's Special Day!"*

I never knew why.

Nor did I care...as long as there was plenty of cake.

But I think I finally understand why this particular day is so important to my parents.

I was kidnapped as a baby--

--and I'm pretty sure it's the day I was returned.

I plan to mark the occasion this year by getting my parents something special.

That's why I stopped by *Outrageous Arnie's Appliance Outlet--*

--and stumbled upon a robbery in progress.

KEEP BACK, LADY!

I'm warning you--

STAY BACK!

Let me think about that for a second...

NO!

Rather not.

How's that for decisiveness?

THWOMP!

=UFFT=

The truth is, I'm not in the mood to celebrate this year.

I've had a major case of the guilts ever since I accidentally destroyed my baby brother's hearing.

Careful, Mister--!

You don't want to mess up *Outrageous Arnie's* monitor madness.

THWIP!

Yeah, I've already caused enough damage for a thousand lifetimes.

BOINGGG!

Uh-oh! My *spider-sense* is warning me of danger.

Someone's trying to sneak up behind me.

No problem!

TWANG!

I'm real efficient at stomping a handful of second-rate stooges.

I just fail where it really counts--

--when it comes to protecting the people I love.

Elsewhere...

Interesting...

Thanks to the psychic link I recently established with *Spider-Girl*...

I sense intense feelings of *guilt*.

They seem centered on a younger sibling.

A brother, I think...

I assume you can use it to our advantage.

Of course.

Although I have to give the girl credit, *Hobgoblin*. Her will is surprisingly strong.

It will take me awhile to pierce her sub-conscious.

Take all the time you need, *Mindworm*.

I want this job done correctly.

I believe she may know the secret of the legendary *"Heart of the Spider."*

If we can trick her into revealing it, I will possess the power to eliminate the *Black Tarantula*--

--and become the new KINGPIN OF CRIME!

What a LOSER!

I can't believe that publicity hound, *Outrageous Arnie*, tried to reward me with a 10% discount coupon on a single item--

--and wanted me to appear at a press conference so that he could award it to me.

I'll never forget the expression on his face when I told him I'm strictly a *Target* girl.

Too bad I couldn't find anything for my parents.

Maybe I'll see something tomorrow.

Right now I'm due at another command performance.

I'm supposed to be meeting some friends at *Café Indigo*--

--and I'm late, as usual.

Odd! My *spider-sense* is tingling again...

It doesn't feel like I'm in any real *danger*.

Odd!

Very odd!

DO NOT PARK

But something's a little *off*.

SURPRISE!

1

3

OSBORN PLAZA

Welcome home, *Norman* and *Brenda!* I just can't wait to hear all about your European honeymoon.

It was simply wonderful! I shot a few million pictures to prove it.

I see you completed the renovations on our living quarters.

Everything's exactly as you requested, Mr. Osborn.

You've done an amazing job, Kristy. I don't know how I ever survived without you.

Being the heir to the Osborn fortune probably helped.

Probably.

How's your family, by the way? You haven't mentioned the *Parkers* in any of your recent e-mails.

No, I...

...I didn't want to burden you.

Is something wrong?

Mary Jane's son suffered a terrible accident and...

...he may have permanently lost his hearing.

The poor child--!

Norman, there must be something we can do.

With all the money the Osborn Corporation invests in medical research, you must know someone who can help.

Y'know, I think I do...

HOO-HA!

CAFÉ INDIGO

Now this is what I call a welcome home party!

I never realized *Maurice* was so popular.

Are you serious, *Donna?* Everyone loves *Moo...err... Maurice.*

How come you never told me your cousin was so hot?

You *touch* her, you *die.*

Awww, quit your kidding!

I don't think *Moose* is kidding, *Brad.*

I'd listen to *Courtney* if I were you.

C'mon, girls! You know me. I'm just playing around.

Only a real creep would hit on his best friend's cousin.

Slide over and make some room.

So, May... I hear you finally broke up with *Gene Thompson.*

Now that you're free, maybe you and I can--

Hey! Isn't that *Sandra Healy?*

I simply must say hello.

WANTED

How's it going, Sandra?

Not bad, May.

I see you're still dodging *Brad Miller.*

What can I say?

The boy's got issues.

So many of them do.

WANTE

If only more guys were like Moose--!

Just look at him with Courtney!

He's so attentive. It's like his whole world revolves around her.

It's ironic-- Gene was a lot like that when we first started dating.

Of course, I was on hiatus from web swinging and had a lot more free time.

Things changed as soon as I went back to being *Spider-Girl.*

I guess I can't really blame Gene for--*whoa!*

I knew *Davida* had asked *Wes* out, but I never expected to run into them *together.*

Looks like Davida's got a new guy.

Uhhhh... yeah.

SQUAD

Hey! Hey! Is this even possible?

Have I really found two gorgeous women without a man to sing their praises?

Hi, JJ.

Sandra, do you know *Jack Jameson*--the *anti-Moose?*

Auntie Moose?

I don't get it.

I do.

ZEEEEEEE

Please excuse me. I have to take this call.

Don't let her apparent disdain fool you. The girl's crazy about me.

Sounds like *someone's* crazy.

May, we just got the most wonderful news...

I'm IN!

Spider-Girl just experienced an emotional spike--

--and I can ride it all the way into her sub-conscious.

Let's see what kind of monsters she has hidden away...

Mom and Dad didn't realize it, but they gave me the perfect excuse to ditch the party.

They got a line on a hearing specialist who may be able to help Benjy.

I can't wait to get home and learn the--

--details.

GRRRRRR!

I-it's my old enemy *Dragon King--!*

Where'd he suddenly come from?

Did he find out who I really am?

Or am I just a random victim?

Annoying insect! I'll crush you where you stand.

No need to exhaust yourself on my account.

This is real freaky! I still don't know if he realizes I'm *Spider-Girl* or--

Oh, NO!

Bad move, little girl! You just maneuvered yourself directly into my sights.

BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA!

Mr. Nobody--!

What's wrong with my *spider-sense?*

He may have the ability to *teleport,* but it still should have warned me.

I need to get out of his line of fire.

This alley should provide me with enough cover to catch my breath--

--and to try to figure out what's happening.

BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA!

It must have been *Mr. Nobody* that I sensed when I entered *Café Indigo.*

He and *Dragon King* must have been trailing me since I left.

Why wasn't my *spider-sense* tingling like a four-alarm blaze?

Here he comes--!

No time to switch into costume.

Not that it matters... since they've already stumbled onto my secret identity.

I've GOT you, you murderous little--

--Chris?

Chris Jarkoer?

I'mnotastalker!

I'mnotastalker!

H-honest, May! I was just on my way to Moose's welcome back bash.

Chris Jarkoer's a decent guy.

We dated a few times...until I messed up... like usual.

I...I... saw you leap into the alley...and I thought you might be in trouble.

Are you okay?

Uhhh...

Just

fine.

What the heck's going on?

Where did *Mr. Nobody* and *Dragon King* go?

They must have teleported away, but Chris still should have seen or heard them.

I sense great *confusion*...and more than a little *doubt*. Do I have it or do I have it?

You've only just begun, my friend!

We need to shatter all her mental defenses and gain complete control of her psyche.

All right ÷yawn÷ but we should also send out for *Chinese*.

"It's going to be a long night..."

Normie Osborn really came through for us.

He cut through months of red tape and arranged an appointment with *Dr. Milton Kaplan,* one of the top ear, nose and throat men in the nation.

Ahh, the perks of wealth!

Still, we'll never be able to thank Normie for this gesture.

Ben is going to get the best care imaginable.

Is Dad trying to tell me I don't have to feel guilty anymore?

I wish I could snap my guilt off like a light switch.

But I can't.

I can't even find the right time to tell my parents that Ben's spider-powers have recently begun to emerge--

--which could become a major problem if *Dr. Kaplan* notices them.

And then there's *Dragon King* and *Mr. Nobody*...

If they know my secret identity, the whole family's in danger.

Her mind is churning with grotesque images of *Dragon King* and *Mr. Nobody*--

--and she also seems inordinately concerned about a *Dr. Milton Kaplan*.

Really?

What more can you tell me about the good doctor?

Not much, but he seems to be connected to that younger sibling. *Wait!* We're in luck...

"She's turning in for the night.

"Her natural defenses are slowly beginning to weaken.

"Yes..."

Whaaa--?!

D-did I fall asleep with my mask on?

But I never-- hey!

This ISN'T my costume.

It isn't even my BODY.

Ewww, GROSS!

I... I've become the BLACK TARANTULA.

H-how did I become the Black Tarantula?

Why ME?!

It can be rather disconcerting at first, Mistress.

Fortunately, we were able to transfer your husband's powers to you before the end.

Husband?

Powers?

End?

What's the gag, Chesbro? What are you trying to pull?

I know you are in mourning, Mistress...but I do not understand your questions.

Cut the act, buster! There's no way you're ever going to convince me that I married a criminal kingpin like that *Black Tarantula.*

My father would kill me.

Besides, I'm only *sixteen.*

B-but we celebrated your *thirty-first* birthday two months ago--

--and your parents *died* years ago.

No.

NO!

I don't believe it-- *ANY of it!*

You really must calm yourself... and gather your wits.

You are the new *Black Tarantula.* You have a sacred responsibility to avenge your beloved husband.

You must learn *who* murdered him and *how.*

I believe your sibling may hold the clue to the culprit's identity.

Y-you mean *Ben?*

BEN is here, too?!

Of course, Ben is *here.* Where *else* would he be?

That must have been one heck of a night-mare, Hotshot.

Y-you have no idea...

Up and at'em! I don't want you to miss a moment of your *special day.*

Does that mean I get to stay home from school?

Not quite! I'm supposed to start work at *Midtown High* in a few days and I don't want to set a bad example.

However, I just may bake a cake if the mood strikes.

I'll understand if you don't have time. You're taking Ben to see the doctor today, aren't you?

Yes, we have an early afternoon appointment. Your father's going with me.

Call me as soon as you hear anything.

Will do!

Ahhhh, she's awake...for now... but I'm sure I can reestablish contact later.

While you were busy, I looked up *Dr. Milton Kaplan* on the internet. There are quite a few of them in the area.

Was one of them a hearing specialist and audiologist?

I believe so.

There's your boy.

Perhaps I should give him a visit...

Pick up some *Thai* or *Middle Eastern* on your way back.

Nothing works up an appetite like a psychic onslaught.

I shovel down a quick breakfast and head for *Midtown High.*

MIDTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

Along the way I make a few fruitless phone calls, trying to learn when *Dragon King* and *Mr. Nobody* escaped custody.

Party went pretty late last night. Staying awake in Ms. Winterhalter's class will be a real challenge.

And exactly *how* does that make today unique?

Wait! I know. Today's that *special day* May has with her parents.

Give me a break, Davida.

I've always loved your special day!

I even tried to convince my parents to have a *Courtney* day.

A special day is pretty amazing when you're four. At sixteen, it's just embarrassing.

Says the girl who has one.

So...*uhhh...* how did things go with you and *Wes?*

I was wondering how long it would take you to ask.

He's a cutie and a real nice guy...but more *your* type than *mine.*

Will you *pleeeeease* ask him out?

You just don't get our relationship. He's a *guy pal.*

Not a *boy-friend.*

Besides...

I'm not over *Gene* yet.

What's the point of starting a new relationship when I already know how it's destined to end?

No self-respecting teenage boy wants a girl who's never on time--

--and constantly disappears on him.

I'm a big fat failure when it comes to juggling a normal life with my spider thing.

I don't know how my dad ever managed to do it.

There's gotta be a *secret...*

And those aren't my only reasons...

What IS the secret?

Huh--?!?

Wha- where am I?

Valentine Motors! Place looks almost as good as I do.

That's all the kid's doing.

I owe you and your old man--*may he rest in peace*--for assigning him to me.

M-my little brother--

--works for *Handsome Richie Valentine*?

Yeah...thanks to ***you***...and I ain't so little, anymore.

I'm real sorry to hear about the *Tarantula*, sis. He was always good to me.

Especially after Mom and Pop got whacked.

I know you're in mourning, Sis, but get your head straight.

Our parents were *murdered?!*

Your life is in serious danger.

Only the *"Heart of the Spider"* could have taken out the Tarantula--

--and I'm betting you're next on the hit list.

You've got to tell me everything you know about the *"Heart"* so that I can protect you.

The *What--?!*

I don't know what you're talking about.

Don't play me, sis! I'm only trying to help.

You were the Tarantula's closest confidante.

You must know the secret of the *"Heart"*.

I don't.

Honest!

I feel like I tumbled down a rabbit hole.

You're LYING!

You've got to be LYING!

HOW RUDE!

If that's how you talk to your big sister, I don't blame her for denying you access to the "Heart of the Spider".

Lady Octopus--!

You may possess the Tarantula's powers, Spider-Girl--

--but you're still no match for me!

Surrender the "Heart" or DIE!

Leave her alone or--

Or you'll repeatedly *slam* your face against my pincers--

--before *impaling* yourself on my tentacles!

ARRRGH!

No!

NO!

NO!

Everyone's snickering behind my back and staring like I've grown a second head.

I really can't blame them.

I completely humiliated myself.

How am I ever going to make this up to poor *Mr. Babbit* or face the rest of the--

Perfect! Just *perfect!* Nothing reinforces a girl's self-worth more than the sight of an ex-boyfriend hitting on an archenemy.

Why her, *Gene?*

Why *Simone DeSantos?*

Oops!

Hi, May!

What's the matter? You look a little spooked.

I'm... *uhhhh*...fine, Meagyn.

Hope you're not obsessing about Babbit's class. Everyone falls asleep on him.

And I wouldn't worry about Gene and Simone.

I overhead him telling his football buddies that it's nothing serious.

You seem to be plugged into *everything* in this school, Meagyn.

ZEEEEEEE

What can I say? People talk in front of me. It's like they don't notice me or something.

I'm sure that isn't true.

Excuse me, but I've been expecting this call.

ZEEEEEEE

Okay, but you hang in there.

I'm pretty sure you can still patch things up with Gene.

Terrific! My love life has hit a new nadir. I've been reduced to accepting advice from *Meagyn Brady.*

Mom--?

How'd things go with the doctor?

They didn't.

You're not going to believe this, but *Kaplan* appears to have been kidnapped.

The people down the hall heard a ruckus and his office is in shambles.

DR. MILTON KAPLAN

The lead detective is someone named *Drasco.*

He's worked with your father before and has asked him to help preserve the crime scene until a forensic team arrives.

Kidnapped--?!

It *isn't* paranoia...if they really *are* out to get you.

Yo, May! I heard about you zonking out in Mr. B's class.

If the spider thing is keeping you up nights, maybe you need a helping hand...

I certainly do, Felicity. I need you to run a computer search on a hearing specialist--a *Dr. Milton Kaplan!*

Let me know if there's anything hinky about the guy--*criminal connections, gambling problems, whatever!*

I...*errrr...* was actually hoping for a more proactive role.

Felicity Hardy is one of the few outsiders who know I'm *Spider-Girl.*

At least I *thought* it was a few.

I'm not so sure after last night.

You want to help me on this or not?

You can count on me.

Fine! I'll call you later.

Seems like Felicity still wants to become my teen sidekick.

As IF!

I'm only a teenager myself.

I need a *boy-friend--not a sidekick!*

I also have to call *Uncle Phil.*

Phil Urich may not be a blood relation, but he's the next best thing, and he works with my dad in the police lab.

Hey, kiddo! I was wondering when you'd call back.

I looked into ***Dragon King*** and ***Mr. Nobody*** like you asked...

MIDTOWN SOUTH PRECINCT

They were both in their cells as of this A.M.

*Are you **sure?***

Absolutely! I had a friend eyeball them for me.

*What's the latest on the **Kaplan** kidnapping?*

That one's a puzzler. No one has any idea ***why*** he was snatched or ***who*** did it.

What's your interest?

He was supposed to examine ***Benjy.***

YIKES!

What's happening?

Mr. Nobody needs a special harness to teleport and I doubt it's hiding in his cell.

If he and ***Dragon King*** didn't attack me last night--***who did?!***

And, though I realize the whole world doesn't revolve around me--

--I'm convinced that I'm somehow responsible for Kaplan's kidnapping.

I've got to find the man.

For Ben's sake--

--and my own!

Unfortunately, I'm no detective.

I haven't the slightest idea how to conduct an investigation.

So I'm going to rely on a little help from my friends...

I speed-dial the number I have for *Darkdevil* and a guarded voice answers...

Yes...?

I need to get an urgent message to *Darkdevil*...

I can pass it along.

I don't know *who* I'm talking to or *what* his relationship is with *DD*, but there's something *familiar* about his voice--

--and I find it oddly *comforting*.

I should take more care when I answer *Spider-Girl's* calls.

She's met me as *Reilly Tyne* on a few occasions--

--and I don't want her asking questions I can't answer.

I also contact *Ladyhawk*.

I know we owe Spider-Girl, Rosetta, but please be careful.

Caution is for *accountants*... not *costumed adventurers*.

The Buzz is next on my list.

Exactly why are we helping *Spider-Girl*, JJ?

I thought you hated her.

She may be awfully full of herself, Richie--

--but that's not unique in the hero biz!

You are such a bonehead!

The *Fantastic Five* are away on a mission.

May I leave a message, *Roberta?*

What'd Spider-Girl want with you, *Mad Dog?*

Exactly what every other woman wants.

A restraining order--?!

Very funny, Gelcan!

Keep the cameras rolling! I just may have our *season finale!*

Kaine, I need you...

Too bad, kid. Weadon's got me and the team running maneuvers in the Pine Barrens.

Y-your brother Ben--?

I...I'll see what I can do.

I'm afraid a simple kidnapping doesn't rate a call to ***assemble,*** Spider-Girl.

However, I can't control what the individual ***Avengers*** do in their spare time.

Avengers take care of their own, American Dream!

I'm surprised you volunteered to help, Sabreclaw.

Any excuse to slam heads, Thunderstrike.

Unlike some of my friends, I don't have any confidential informants--

--and I'm not experienced when it comes to forcing information out of criminal contacts.

I'm a friendly neighborhood super hero--

--not a dark and brooding vigilante type.

But I've *gotta* find *Kaplan.*

I just *gotta!*

Even as I race around the city, I keep an eye out for *Dragon King* and *Mr. Nobody.*

I still don't know if I faced them or a pair of imposters.

I just have a feeling that their attack is somehow connected to Kaplan's disappearance.

I even drop in on *Detective Drasco,* but...

This case is going nowhere, Spider-Girl.

No one has made a ransom demand and Kaplan didn't have any debts or enemies.

Please keep me advised.

How is she tied to Kaplan? Could the *Hobgoblin* have--

Nah! No way he'd waste his time with a petty snatch.

AHHH, so sweet...

Her emotions are really spiking now--

--and I'm pushing her into the red zone!

I'm glad you're happy.

I just wish I could convince *Milton* to be more forthcoming about their relationship.

B-but I've never even *met* Spider-Girl or--

=UGGGN=

THWAK!

Hate to break it to you, Hobby--but I sense he's telling the truth.

But *you* said--

Get over it! I never claimed to be an expert at mind reading.

My specialty is twisting perceptions and emotions.

I suppose it doesn't really matter.

We need to get ready. Spider-Girl is already on the hunt.

She's a pro. She'll find us eventually.

But you will *pay* for failing me.

Arrrgh! I stink at playing detective. I've been at it for hours and haven't found a single clue.

Why do you mutts always draw your guns as soon as I appear?

Is a civil conversation completely out of the question?

YEOW!

W-what'd you jab me with, you miserable little--

Watch your language, my friend--

--or those *stingers* won't be your greatest source of discomfort.

W-why you jacking us, Spider-Girl?

We ain't done nuthin'.

Maybe I just like your company.

Or maybe... *just maybe*...you know where I can find a certain kidnapped doctor.

There could be a certain *warehouse* worth a look.

What's the address *worth* to you?

The *teeth* in your mouth.

I doubt this warehouse tip will pan out, but it's all I've got.

I really wish I knew what I was doing.

I'm sure my father would have rescued *Kaplan,* cured *Ben* and solved the *Dragon King/Mr. Nobody* mystery by now.

Maybe *Felicity* has the right idea.

I should try to con Dad out of retirement--

--and become *his* sidekick.

Uh-oh! My spider-sense is tingling.

Someone's approaching--!

Doc Magus!

Since when does the *Sorcerer Supreme* haunt this neighborhood?

Someone or something has been tampering with the astral plane, Spider-Girl.

I have detected enormous discharges of *psychic energy* from this general vicinity.

Uhhhh... good luck with that!

Me, I've got more mundane matters on my mind.

Spider-Girl, ***wait--!***

I sense a possible connection between our concerns.

Not possible, Doc.

I'm just hunting a plain vanilla kidnapper.

Talking to Doc's *astral projection* is just plain weird.

I wonder if he has any idea how much it creeps me out.

Although, knowing him, he probably does it on purpose.

He seems to like playing the all-knowing lord of mystic mumbo-jumbo.

I wonder what he meant when he said--

Hello, Spider-Girl.

Have you missed me?

I-it's FURY, the Goblin Queen!

Is *she* the kidnapper?

Oh, no! My *spider-sense* must be on the fritz again.

It should have warned me.

Gotta duck! She's swooping down.

Here's my chance to try a stunt I've been aching to try.

I need to plant my feet on the girder--

--and employ my ability to *repel* objects.

SKWAKKK!

Nicely done, Spider-Girl.

That little stunt earned you a fistful of exploding marbles.

The yellow ones are my favorite. They induce vomiting.

Funny Face!

Of course! This isn't the first time he's gathered a super-team to take me down.

PWIFF!!

My impact webbing--

--should contain *him* and his *marbles.*

KWAM!

SWAP!

BWAK!

BWAM!

AKKK!

Save yourself, Bunky!

:gasp:

S-save yourself!

I wouldn't congratulate myself just yet, Spider-Girl.

Overconfidence often precedes failure.

Get out of my way, you filthy animal!

You're blocking my shot.

Canis... and *Doctor Jade?!*

I need to twist my entire body if I have any hope of breaking his grip.

There! I did it-- but I'm completely off-balance.

PWAAAP!!

:UFFFFT:

No time to recover.

Must go limp and hope for the best.

CRASH!

Ouch! That's one stunt I hope I never have to re--*ohmigosh!*

What is this-- a surprise party?!

I don't believe it! It's *Spyral*, the master of time and space...

Klaw, the world's greatest cat burglar...

La Fantome, the felon of fashion...

Bitter Frost...

Kodiak, the Zen assassin...

Reverb...

And the *Brothers of the Scrier*.

How is this even possible?

The majority of these people should be in jail.

How did so many escape?

It's like someone's dredged up *everyone* I've ever fought.

The odds are overwhelming, but I *can't* give up.

I *won't* surrender.

Mere determination cannot survive against the unrelenting power of *Apox*, the Omega Skrull!

Or the sinister cunning of *Seth*, the serpent god of death!

THOK!

Unnnnn

:gasp:

:SPLUTTER:

C-can't breathe!

:choke:

I...I'm *drowning.*

WHA--?!

W-where am I?

You mustn't relax for an instant. It will take all your strength to remain afloat.

C-Chesbro--?!

W-why are you doing this?

I am not a fool, mistress.

I know the truth.

Only you possess the secret of the *"Heart of the Spider"*.

Only you could have murdered my former master.

Give me the secret or I will allow *Aftershock* to entertain your brother...

B-but I don't know about any *"Heart"*.

I never even heard of it before today.

That's the old *Spider-Girl* spirit I remember.

Don't let him intimidate you, girl!

Please, sis! Please give them what they want for the love of--

AAIIEEEE!

Stop pretending that you're surprised.

You're the only one who knew all the *Tarantula's* secrets.

The only one he truly trusted.

I-if we were so close...

W-why would I kill him?

I don't think you ever forgave him for ordering the death of your parents.

Just as you will never forgive *yourself*--

--for allowing your brother to *DIE!*

Am I suffering from some form of amnesia?

Is *this* what my life has become?

Did I actually marry the *Black Tarantula?*

It all seems so--

No!

NO!

This *isn't* me.

It *can't* be!

What's happening?

Why is she still resisting?

No need to be concerned.

She's merely struggling to maintain the last vestiges of her self-identity.

It's a losing battle.

What are you madmen talking about?

Can't you see she's growing weaker?

She'll *drown* if you don't stop.

I'm afraid that's a foregone conclusion, doctor.

Now then...

Give me the SECRET!

My *mind* tells me this is real--

--and my *physical senses* agree.

B-but my *heart*--

--my *instinct*--

--says it *isn't.*

ARRRGH!

Do I dare risk Benjy's life on a hunch?

Doesn't seem like I have much choice.

I have to follow my heart.

Have to believe in myself.

W-what's she *doing?*

Why is she allowing herself to sink?

I... I'm not sure.

She has somehow managed to retreat inside herself.

Got to anchor myself to the floor--

--and try to get some leverage.

A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

I've second-guessed myself too many times.

Allowed doubts to erode my self-confidence--

--and failures to overshadow victories.

No more!

ARRRRK!

I've messed up in the past--

--and will in the future.

But I have to remember that it's all part of growing up.

All part of my hero's journey.

If I...

When I survive...

...I'm going to make a concentrated effort to trust my instincts--

--and keep moving forward.

Almost out of air.

Not that it matters. I'll never stop fighting.

I'll find a way to win.

Failure is never an option for me because...

KRA-KA-KRAAAAK!

My name is *May "Mayday" Parker*--

--and I am the daughter of SPIDER-MAN!

SPLOOOSH!

ARRGH!

Why can't she just lay down and *die* like a good little girl?

S-she severed our connection.

I...I've *lost* her.

W-what's the Hobgoblin doing here and where is B--

Wait! He was never here.

It was all an illusion!

I assume you're Dr. Kaplan.

Look out!

That masked lunatic is about to attack!

Very perceptive, Milton. I'm going to blast you and the young lady into--

Forget it, Hobgoblin!

There's no time for revenge. We need to leave-- *NOW!*

We're about to be overrun by super heroes.

How many are coming?

Uhhhh... I'd say ALL of them!

GO! GO!

Aren't you chasing after them?

DOOOOOM!

Nope! I'm sticking with you, doc.

Get DOWN!

I had a hunch *Hobgoblin* booby-trapped his exit.

A few moments later...

Hold still, Spider-Girl...so I can shatter the manacles without damaging your web-shooters.

Watch the wrist and fingers, too.

I still don't understand why you thought a simple kidnapping merited so much attention.

Some of us have a planet to protect.

Give her a break, Nova.

Spider-Girl's the reason a lot of us are still here.

Yeah... *right*, J2!

Seems like Doc Magus was right!

According to Kaplan, Hobgoblin's stooge-- *some guy called Mindworm*-- was manipulating my mind.

They obviously need this *"Heart of the Spider"* thingie to fight the *Black Tarantula.*

Maybe I should try to contact the real *Chesbro* and--*nah!*

The *Tarantula* would only retaliate.

I may want the *Hobgoblin* to pay for his crimes--

--but I can't condone *murder!*

I can't believe you actually helped rescue *Dr. Kaplan.*

I spoke to him about an hour ago.

He's reviewed Ben's medical records and believes that a simple operation can cure his hearing problem.

That's a relief.

I'm still confused about the Hobgoblin's involvement.

You say he wasn't expecting you?

Uhhhh... no.

He seemed pretty surprised when I showed up.

Of course, I was with the *Avengers* and a few dozen other guys.

Okay, I left out a few details.

Like *Mindworm* and his hallucinations.

I...I just couldn't tell my parents about being married to the *Black Tarantula.*

Besides, they already have enough to--*hey!*

My *spider-sense* is tingling again.

And, from the expression on Dad's face, I'm pretty sure his *isn't.*

I'm not getting a real sense of danger, either.

Whoever's out there doesn't seem to pose a real problem.

Say, I wonder if it's *Gene Thompson...*

Maybe he's just trying to get up enough nerve--

--to beg my forgiveness--

--and ask me to take him back.

Whatever! Since it doesn't represent a threat, I'm not going to worry about it tonight.

How's that for decisiveness?

I owe you an apology, May.

With all the confusion, I completely forgot about your special day.

That's okay.

I may have outgrown it, anyway.

Well, *I* certainly haven't.

I stopped by *Fracano's Bakery* on the way home so...

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, MAYDAY!

Meanwhile in Manhattan...

We may have a problem, master...

Somewhere in South America...

What is it, Chesbro?

According to a reliable informant, the Hobgoblin has somehow learned of the legendary "Heart of the Spider".

That is as unfortunate as it was inevitable.

There's more-- he is attempting to enlist Spider-Girl's aid in obtaining it.

Now this is distressing...

No one may threaten the Black Tarantula with impunity--

--and that includes SPIDER-GIRL!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

10 YEARS!

FROM—
Pat +
Scott

#16

Paris...

As a special advisor to *President George Washington Bridge*, I can assure you, America is deeply committed to aiding the people of *China*.

Arrogant fool!

You were warned what would happen if you attended this conference.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC

The recent attack on the Chinese government by *Doctor Doom* has resulted in an economic crisis that affects the entire global community.

You should have taken the death threats seriously.

But you couldn't resist the spotlight.

Congratulations, Senator!

You're about to make international headlines.

Sound suppressers at 100%.

Magnetic field set to max.

CONTACT!

Arrrgh!

Senator--?!

I...I didn't hear a shot.

There's no blood.

Could it be a heart attack?

We need a *doctor*.

Someone get a DOCTOR!

--I doubt he'll arrive in time to resuscitate the good Senator.

What the--?!

Watch it, mate!

WHUMP

B-but you bumped into *me*.

Even if you can find one--

Another day.

Another termination.

I love my job.

KLIKT

Who would have thought that being an international hit person could be so much fun?

Scoring this **stealth suit** was the best thing that ever happened to me.

I get to travel the world, sample the finest cuisines, live like a queen--

--and there's always plenty of work for a skilled assassin.

I might as well check out my next assignment.

CONFIDENTIAL

Wonderful! Another costumed adventurer...

Where do they all come from?

I suppose it doesn't really matter.

PRIVATE

New York is so beautiful this time of year.

I can stay at the **Plaza** and get a great steak at **Peter Luger**.

BROKEN BONDS

MANHATTAN, two days later...

My name is *May "Mayday" Parker* and I am the daughter of *Spider-Man.*

For the past few days, I've been scouring the *Fashion District,* hoping to find *Daniel Kingsley.*

His old office was lost in the fire that destroyed *Kingsley Comfortware* a while back.*

Reliable sources claim he has new digs in this neighborhood, but I can't find them.

I need to put the squeeze on Daniel until he gives up his twin brother *Roderick*--

--who's better known as the *Hobgoblin.*

the fashion district authentic • distinctive

NorthFork Bank

What's her deal, anyway?

Maybe it's some kind of publicity stunt.

Somebody ought'a call the cops. She's disrupting traffic.

the fashion district INFORMATION

fashion INFORMATION

*Back in *Spider-Girl #99* --Molly

Oops! I seem to be drawing a crowd.

No sense wasting any more time here.

I should just head home and catch up on my schoolwork.

Look, honey--*it's Spider-Girl!*

Go, Spidey! GO!

Hobgoblin recently tried to kill me with the help of some psychic *brain-twister* called the *Mindworm.*

According to *Doc Magus,* my man in the mystic arts, Mindworm lost his ability to manipulate my mind a few days ago--

--when I somehow managed to shatter the psychic link that bound us together.

ONE WAY

Since I no longer have anything to fear from Mindworm, I can now concentrate on--

A) Feeling guilty because I caused my baby brother to lose his hearing and may have accidentally jump-started his spider-powers.

B) Fretting over the fact that my mom starts work at my school tomorrow.

C) Trying to get over my breakup with *Gene Thompson.*

D) Finding out who's been stalking me the past few days.

And, finally--*E)* Slamming the *Hobgoblin* behind bars before he can cause even more trouble.

Which, of course, brings me back to *Daniel.*

He's the weak link in the *Kingsley* family.

Where is he hiding?

What's happened to him?

:Ahem:

Roderick?

Any idea when I can go home?

Not that I haven't enjoyed all this...*uhhh*... quality time together.

It's just that I have a business to run--

--and you have all the help you need in *Mr. Turner.*

Am I mistaken, Daniel?

I was under the impression you've been *out* of business ever since *Kingsley Comfortware* burned to the ground.

Y-yes...but I... *uhhh*...I plan to rebuild and... *ummm*...

Do you trust me, Daniel?

Huh?

Do you *trust* me, Daniel?

Y-yeah... *sure*...of course, I trust you, Roderick.

We are *brothers* after all.

Twin brothers.

Yet you have repeatedly *betrayed* me.

I...

I admit I've exercised poor judgment.

Made some mistakes.

But I thought you'd forgiven me.

I have, Daniel.

However, *Mindworm* and I plan to seize control of the underworld, and we're at a most critical stage.

I need you to stay *here* where I can keep an eye on you.

You cannot leave until *I* can fully trust *you.*

And, of course, the *Hobgoblin* trusts *no one.*

FOREST HILLS, early the next morning...

You'd better get your butt in gear, young lady--

--you don't want to be *late* for your first day of school.

Where have I heard *that* before?

You know where I keep the spare diapers, and remember--*no chili!*

Okay! Okay! I was thinking of ordering *chicken vindaloo*, anyway.

Peter!

Relax, Mary Jane. I know what to do. This is not the first time Ben and I have batched it.

Oops! Forgot my house keys.

Take your time, Mom.

This will give me a chance to talk to Dad.

He needs to know about Ben's emerging spider-powers.

What's with Benjy's new jammies?

You like them?

I picked them up at the *Spider Shoppe* the other day.

They seemed appropriate.

More than you realize...

That's when I open up--

--explaining how I first learned that Benjy had also inherited his spider-powers.

All in all, Dad takes it rather well.

D-does your mother know?
Nope.
Figured she had enough on her mind.
I'm ready.
Finally.
Maybe you should get up a little earlier so that you can get out on time.
You're enjoying this entirely too much.
I figured we'd have a few more years before *you* started having secrets, little guy.
I still can't believe that you're really going to be working at *Midtown High*.
Only part-time.
A few hours a week.
It's not like you have to spend your lunch hour with me every day.
Like I'm even going to acknowledge you once we hit school property.
Uh-oh! My spider-sense is tingling.
Sort of.
It doesn't quite feel like I'm in any real danger.
Certainly not of the *Hobgoblin* or *Mindworm* variety.
But it is warning me of...*something.*
Without being too obvious--since I don't want to make Mom nervous--I look over my shoulder.
I don't see anything out of the ordinary.
Odd!
Very odd!
Someone is definitely stalking me.
I just wish I knew *who*--
--and, more importantly, *why?*

Spider-Girl has been targeted for assassination?

I...

I must ask Why.

It's her own fault.

She has chosen to insinuate herself in my affairs once too often--

--and that may prove fatal now that the Hobgoblin is attempting to unseat me as the new Kingpin of Crime.

I was under the impression you cared for the young lady, master.

I do.

However, I have an international empire to consider.

These are your instructions, Chesbro.

I expect them to be carried out without question.

I live to serve the Black Tarantula--

--and will do as you command.

Welcome to the staff, Mrs. Parker.

MIDTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

I'm afraid this office is the only one we could scrounge up for you.

It's cramped, hot in the summer, cold in the winter and you'll have to share.

Have you ever considered a job in sales, Mr. Slattery?

I'm sure it will be fine.

I didn't take this job for the perks.

Really?

I thought you were a big fan of burnt coffee and stale donuts.

Those are the files of some students I think you should meet.

And then--?

You try to help them.

They all appear rather troubled and could use a sympathetic shoulder.

You were hired to be an advocate for the students.

How-ever, it goes without saying that you work for the school district--

--and that may present an occasional conflict.

I expect complete loyalty from my staff, Mrs. Parker.

I understand, Mr. Slattery...

And I promise to do this job to the best of my abilities.

BROOKLYN, a few hours later...

You got a call, boss...

BRITO IMPORTS

Take a message, Lenny.

I was just about to take our new file clerk out to...*unnn*... lunch.

This could be important, boss.

Guy on the other end sounds real weird.

Like he's using some kind of voice gizmo.

Claims he's got a big business proposition for you.

A business proposition, *huh?*

I'll take it in my office, Lenny--

--and you'd better pray it ain't no come-on from the cable company.

Am I speaking to *Fancy Dan?*

What can you do for me?

I can supply you with the secret files of *Wilson Fisk*, the former *Kingpin of Crime*.

For a *price.*

What is it, honey?

What's wrong?

It's just business, baby.

Don't trouble your pretty little head about it!

But I want to know *more,* Fancy Dan.

Tell me *everything--*

--and I'll leave you with memories of the most satisfying *lunch* you've ever had.

FOREST HILLS, Midtown High...

I'm torn between calling my dad to find out how things are going with Benjy--

--or seeing if *Detective Drasco* can use his police contacts to scare up a location on *Daniel Kingsley.*

I flip a mental coin and decide to go with--

Careful, big guy!

You need to slow down and signal before you--

--Gene?!

Sorry about that, May.

I guess I wasn't paying attention.

Well... *uhhhh*...nice almost bumping into you.

But I've got places to go and people to *yada, yada, yada.*

Yeah...

I miss you, May--

--and I really wish we could get back together.

WHAT?!?

I'm just telling you what I heard while I was twisting the psychic screws on *Fancy Dan.*

Some dude claims to have copies of *Fisk's* old files and he's putting 'em up for auction.

Spider-Girl claimed she destroyed them.

She LIED to me!

And you're always so *truthful* with her!

I AM.

I've never denied the fact that I want her *dead.*

You want me to get the details on the auction?

No, continue to concentrate on ensnaring the local underbosses.

They are the backbone of the *Black Tarantula's* criminal empire and we'll need them to outmaneuver him.

I'll assign my pet cop to pursue the files.

Manhattan...

Do you recognize my voice, Detective Drasco?

Yeah, but I'm at a crime scene. I really can't talk now.

Then just listen--!

The files of the former *Kingpin of Crime* have apparently resurfaced and are currently on the market.

You must *secure* them--

--at ANY COST!

Sure, I'll get right on it.

This job shouldn't be too difficult...

...especially since Spider-Girl gave those files to *me.*

Ironic, isn't it?

DTOWN HIGH

Here I've been thinking that *Gene* was happily moving on with his life--

--when he's as *miserable* as I am.

Maybe we should give our relationship another shot.

It's my fault everything went bad.

He only wanted to spend time with me, but I kept disappearing on him.

I'm sure he'd be more understanding if I explained my situation and just told him that I am secretly--*uh-oh!*

I'm feeling *stalked* again.

Whoa! What's *your* problem?

You *cool*, Parker?

You look a little *spooked.*

I...I'm *fine*, José.

ZEEEEEEE

I've got to chill before I get a rep for being some kind of weirdo.

Hello--?

Is that you, Spider-Girl?

This is *Chesbro.*

I need to see you *immediately.*

Your life is in considerable danger.

You have been targeted by one of the most dangerous assassins in the world.

I...

I'll be there as soon as possible.

As soon as possible proves to be about two hours later.

I attend my last class, walk Mom home and grab a quick snack.

I also do some major soul-searching.

Chesbro works for the *Black Tarantula*--

--who's been ruling the underworld ever since the death of *Wilson Fisk*.

For reasons I've never fully understood, the *Tarantula* has helped me on quite a few occasions--

--even though we're on opposing sides of the law.

But I still maintain a healthy suspicion of criminals bearing gifts.

Trick or treat?

It's about time you showed up, Spider-Girl.

I was beginning to fear for your safety.

I didn't know you cared.

How can you say that?

After all we've been through?

Admit it, Chesbro! You wouldn't hesitate if the Tarantula ordered you to pull the trigger.

I live to obey him--

--but I enjoy some orders far *less* than others.

My master recently received a tip that this assassin has been engaged to eliminate you.

And, of course, the Tarantula's sharing out of the goodness of his heart.

Hoo-boy! This file is useless.

Aside from calling himself *Deadspot*, no one seems to know *anything* about this bogeyman.

His real name's unknown. His photo's never been taken. They can't even confirm the kills he's made...or even if he really *is* a he.

NO KNOWN PHOTO

DSPOT

UNKNOWN

UNKNOWN

UNKNOWN

I'm only a friendly neighborhood super hero. Why would anyone even think of sending such an international hotshot after me?

Someone obviously holds you in great regard. Our source was unable to learn *who* hired ***Deadspot.***

It just doesn't make any... sense.

What is it, Spider-Girl? Did something just occur to you?

No, not really...

Other than the fact that the ***Black Tarantula*** is the only *international guy* I know.

Thanks for the heads-up, Chesbro.

I'll keep in touch and let you know how things turn out.

Why would ***Chesbro*** warn me if the ***Tarantula*** is behind this hit?

Unless they're trying to trick me into going after ***Deadspot...*** or *someone else.*

I have a hunch I won't have to wait long for an answer...

For a little man, you have a very big mouth.

I would like my file and the name of your source.

I hate loose ends.

Long enough.

I'm afraid ***Spider-Girl*** isn't my only target.

You have also become a liability.

Relax! You won't feel a thing.

I specialize in making my work look like accidents.

Would you prefer a sudden heart attack or a slip in the shower?

Wait! If I must die, I would like to know who hired you.

Aren't you just ***adorable!***

This may be a breach of professional ethics, but my client is--

Wha--how long have you been standing there?

I *knew* I sensed another presence in the room.

Circling around the neighborhood paid off.

SKRAAAAASSH!

DEADSPOT, I presume.

My! My! Aren't you the tricky little minx?

This should prove interesting. I rarely get the chance to talk to my targets.

She was about to reveal her client, Spider-Girl. If only you had waited another moment--!

I *save* your life and you *criticize* my timing?!

Should I go out for a burger and come back later?

You don't want to fill up on fast food.

Not in that outfit, sweetie.

I have a dinner reservation at *Sparks*.

I'd invite you along--

--if you weren't about to *die*.

Thanks, anyway.

I have other plans.

For *me* as well as *you*.

THWIP!

THWIP!

Mind if I ask how you've kept your sex a secret? Everyone thinks you're a guy.

Most *hit-persons* are...and I've never left a witness behind.

Which doesn't bode well for you, my dear.

SSSRRAAASST!

You can't play with her, Spider-Girl.

She must be subdued before she turns *invisible.*

There goes that big mouth again.

Chesbro seems sincere. Maybe the *Black Tarantula* isn't--

Mr. C-- NO!

NO!

ZZZERRRROOOPT!

Did I neglect to mention the dangers of touching me?

My bad.

ARRGH!

Chesbro--!

R-run!

Save yourself!

POW

His pulse is strong.

Even stronger than *mine,* in fact.

How is that even possible?

W-why risk yourself for me?

You have to ask--

--after all we've been through?

Uh-oh! Deadspot's trying to sneak up on me.

Marco!

Have to rely on my *spider-sense* to keep out of range--

--while I try to zero in on her.

Marco!

MARCO!

POLO!

TWAKK!

How did you DO that?!

Y-you shouldn't have been able to see me or avoid me.

I guess your file isn't the only one that needs updating.

I had a perfect record until you, Spider-Girl.

I intend to keep it--

--even if I have to back off until I learn a lot more about you.

Ohmigosh! Could Deadspot be my stalker?

She doesn't *feel* the same, but that may be because she was only *observing* me earlier.

I *can't* let her escape.

If she knows my secret identity, my whole family's in danger.

You'll never be able to avoid me in such a confined space.

Big mistake, girlfriend.

Now look who's being *adorable--!*

I somehow manage to dodge her touch as the elevator heads downward until...

Well, well--what have we here?

The hotel ballroom--!

Let's CRASH the party!

W-what's Spider-Girl doing here?

Is she with the bride or the groom?

Hey! Leave me alone--!

That costumed freak just attacked my photographer!

She's taking all the attention off me and ruining my wedding!

Get her OUT of here!

W-whatever you say, Sweetums.

Sweetums has a bit of a temper, dude.

Told you not to marry her.

Now's the time for *support*, bud...not *told-you-sos*.

THWIP!

I hate to butt into a private conversation, but I have to agree with your friend here.

Bridezilla does seem a little shrill.

This has all been a big misunderstanding.

I am truly sorry for disrupting your special day.

You think you can get off that easy?

My parents spent a fortune on this wedding.

I'll sue you for everything you have, you miserable #$%&*@#

Sheesh, Lady! Learn to take an apology.

And such *language!*

There are *children* present.

THWIP!

Consider this a wedding present--

--for your GUESTS!

Mfft

Mfft

Terrific! I lost *Deadspot* in the confusion.

I can no longer sense her.

D-did you see what that ruffian did to the bride?

Serves her right--

--for sticking us bridesmaids with such ugly dresses.

Well, this job didn't work out exactly as planned.

Thanks for the uniform, honey!

You'll be fine when you wake up--

--and you'll have a great story for all your *BFFs.*

Spider-Girl is proving to be a greater challenge than anticipated.

I need to be better prepared the next time we meet.

Now, if I can only find a cab, I can still make my dinner reservation.

ARRGH! I spend the next few hours dodging wedding guests and hanging around Sparks--

--but still can't find *Deadspot.*

Amazingly, however, *Chesbro* seems fully recovered.

Unfortunately, the experience hasn't loosened his tongue.

Either he truly doesn't know who hired *Deadspot*--

--or he's protecting the *Tarantula.*

As if the big *T* needed to be protected from *me!*

Is it possible the *Hobgoblin* contracted the hit?

Or is that just what the *Tarantula* wants me to think?

Of course, I have an even bigger problem.

If *Deadspot* is the one who has been stalking me for the past few days--

--she already knows that I'm *May Parker*--

--and could be a threat to my entire family!

#17

WANTED
BY THE UNDERWORLD
DEAD OR ALIVE

Rainy days and *spandex*--*not exactly a match made in heaven!*

I'd much rather be snuggled in my favorite comforter and catching up on homework.

Instead I've been web-swinging around the city--

--making a prime target of myself--

--in a vain attempt to draw *Deadspot* into the open.

No such luck!

The weather's so miserable even my not-so-friendly international assassin appears to have taken the day off.

I wish I could follow her lead--

--but my parents just called and asked me to meet them at *Dr. Kaplan's* office.

I hope there's nothing wrong with my little brother.

It's my fault *Benjy* was injured--

--and has to see a hearing specialist.

I'm supposed be this hotshot super hero--

--but I can never seem to protect the people I love.

My name is *May "Mayday" Parker* and I am the daughter of *Spider-Man.*

A MATTER OF TRUST!

I slip into the building that houses Kaplan's office--

--and use my *spider-sense* to guide me to a deserted storeroom where I can have some privacy.

And, a few minutes later...

Hey, guys! Got here as soon as I could. Is Benjy okay?

We didn't mean to alarm you, hotshot. Benjamin is fine.

And he's going to be even *better* soon.

Wha-what's going on?

I can explain, young lady.

Based on the tests I've conducted, I believe a small surgical procedure can restore ***most***--if not ***all***--of your brother's hearing.

Really--?!

Contrary to popular belief, there are no guarantees when it comes to the practice of medicine--

--but I'm rather confident of a positive outcome.

Just to be safe, however, I want the entire family to take a blood test.

We need to be prepared for the *unexpected*--

--and establish the best possible donor.

I guess I should be hopeful--

--but the old ***Parker*** luck practically guarantees ***something*** will go wrong!

I already blew through the wad you gave me and experienced muscle doesn't come cheap.

Offer *double* the usual fee.

Tell them the *Crimelord* pays for quality work.

About your name--

--some of the guys think it's kind of *corny.*

Big deal.

After tonight, you and I are going to be too *rich* to care *what* anyone thinks.

It's all *good,* chief.

I got everything on your list.

I knew I could count on you, *Dante.*

How is the recruitment drive going?

Not so good.

So...what do *you* honestly think we should do?

The man comes highly recommended, *Mary Jane.*

I say we go ahead with the operation.

Me too.

That makes it unanimous.

I was debating about pulling Dad off to the side and telling him about *Deadspot*--

--but he's got enough on his plate.

You coming home with us, May?

Might as well...

This weather isn't fit for man or beast.

I doubt anyone's going to need a *web-spinner* tonight.

VALENTINE MOTOR

PWOOM! PWOOM! PWOOM! PWOOM!

What the--?!?

I-it's some kind of *gas!*

We're under ATTACK!

It must be a rival gang.

Cops would have identified themselves by now.

What's happened to this world?

There was a time when you could operate a nice, quiet *chop shop* without fear of--

ullllp

Good evening, *Mr. Valentine*...or should I call you *Handsome Richie?*

H-how--

Your emergency *escape hatch* was mentioned in some documents that recently came into my possession.

I intend to auction these papers and thought you might want to offer a bid.

Barely an hour later...

He called himself "Crimelord"?

Can you believe it? You'd think he could have put a little more effort into coming up with a better--

Please stay on point, Valentine.

Uhhh...yeah... sure, Mr. Chesbro. Anyway, he claims to have these old files that used to belong to Wilson Fisk, the former Kingpin of Crime.

Them again? I thought they had been turned over to the police months ago.

I'm just telling you what the man said.

But I need to know if I'm missing something.

Did someone declare a gang war without telling me?

I mean, like, what's with all the beefcake and the smoke machine?

There are many who wish to rule the underworld and replace the Black Tarantula.

As his chief lieutenant, my life is also in constant jeopardy.

Yeah, I heard a rumor about you almost getting nailed the other day.

You needn't be concerned for my safety.

Whatever you say, Chesbro! I just do what I'm told.

I merely wish to be notified as soon as you know the exact time and place of his auction.

I know the perfect person to send after him.

How do you want me to handle this Crimelord creep?

Early the next morning...

RRRING!

DAILY BUGLE

Yes, Doctor.

I understand.

Fine, we'll see you later this afternoon.

What did he say, Peter?

ESU

We're on for tomorrow morning.

Kaplan has already booked the *O.R.* and wants us to check Ben in today.

I don't like the idea of my baby being alone in the hospital.

No problem. Kaplan already arranged for us to spend the night.

What about the blood thing?

Any of us could be a donor, but Kaplan thinks you're the best match.

I don't believe it.

I may actually get a chance to make amends for my carelessness.

Benjy-boy, things are finally starting to go our way.

I told you everything would eventually work out, hotshot.

You just have to keep the faith.

Whoa! Has reality suddenly shifted?

Is it possible that the Parker family is really headed for a happy ending?

You ignorant, incompetent FOOL!

I gave you one simple task, Detective Drasco--

--to find this so-called CRIMELORD and obtain the FISK FILES!

I told you I'm on it, Hobgoblin.

GO--

--and just remember that both our futures may be at stake!

I must have those files. Not only do they describe the operation of Fisk's criminal enterprises in minute detail--

--they also list every politician, judge or law enforcement official who ever took a bribe.

Hey, I don't want it falling into the wrong hands, either.

What did you sense, Mindworm?

Was the good detective telling the truth?

Can I trust him?

Always hard to read cops.

The guy seems to be hiding something, but that's only natural when you're playing both sides.

Besides, I didn't think you trusted anyone.

I don't.

Good policy in our biz.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm off to visit another one of the Tarantula's underbosses.

Excellent!

Once we have mentally ensnared a majority of his people, we will no longer need the Fisk Files--

--to wrest the underworld from the BLACK TARANTULA!

DTOWN HIGH CHOOL

Wow.

That's pretty heavy.

Yeah, I volunteered to spend the night at the hospital with everyone else.

My parents thought it would be better if I stayed home, got a good night's rest and met them early tomorrow.

I didn't know hospitals performed operations on *Saturdays.*

Kaplan didn't want to wait.

I don't blame him.

You think there's any real hope of you actually sleeping tonight?

I...

No.

Probably not.

Hey, guys!

Uhhhh... Davida...you mind if I steal May for a few minutes?

It's her call, Thompson.

She's a free agent now.

It's okay, D.

I'll call you later.

I don't think Miss Kirby likes me very much.

What do you expect, Gene? You broke up with her best friend.

Yeah, about *that...*

Are you willing to make the necessary changes to give us a fighting chance?

Whatever!

Have you thought about our last conversation?

Do you want to get back together?

The exact time and place aren't going to be released until the last minute, but the **auction** is definitely going down tonight.

What else can you tell me, *Cottonmouth?*

YES!

It's a *go.*

The minimum bid is a cool **million.**

Crimelord expects the winner to lay down at least 10% as a good faith gesture.

The rest will be handed over as soon as the material's been authenticated to the customer's satisfaction.

What arrangements have been made for security?

There's still going to be a significant amount of cash on hand.

Every bidder brings his own muscle.

That way everyone feels *protected.*

Call me when you receive the final details.

The *Tarantula* has never expressed any interest in these files.

He doesn't care *how* the former Kingpin functioned or who he bribed.

But I believe that someone as devious and insidious as the *Hobgoblin* could use this information to gain a foothold against my master.

Thus, I must take the appropriate steps to protect him...

ZEEEEEEE

It's me, Spider-Girl.

I don't know what to think.

I really meant to head straight home.

No way was I going web-swinging today.

Chesbro? Are you calling about Deadspot?

No, I haven't learned anything since our last encounter.

However, I do have something interesting to report. Remember the disk that contained the former Kingpin's files?

Yeah, I turned it over to a cop friend of mine.

How close a friend? The disk has apparently resurfaced and someone called **Crimelord** is holding an auction for it.

M-maybe there was more than one disk?

I didn't want to risk a cold--

--or an encounter with *Deadspot.*

Is **that** what you choose to believe?

I ♥ NY

UNCLEAN NOT

Not when there's a chance my baby bro may need me tomorrow.

But now...

Hey, Drasco-- old buddy, old pal!

How is my favorite street detective?

You never call. You never send a text message.

What do you want now, Spider-Girl?

We need a face-to-face.

Can it wait? I'm on a stake-out now.

Sooner is better...and you **owe** me.

All right. All right. I'll tell you where to meet me--

Seedy's

"--but you'd better not spook my pigeon."

Well, well, if it ain't *Charlie Kurkle.*

I heard you took a short fall.

Yeah, but I been out for a couple weeks now.

You looking for work, Charlie?

I know a guy who knows a guy who's hiring.

It's only for tonight, but the pay's not bad.

Appreciate the offer, Curly.

I'm into my own thing right now.

If it pans out the way I'm hoping, I may be set for life.

I'm not happy with you, Detective.
Oh, yeah?
Why's that?
Word is that someone's trying to auction off the Kingpin's files.
The ones I gave you.
I'll admit it does sound a little out of character.
Your naïveté is showing, Spider-Girl.
You know me better than that.
Do I really strike you as the kind of guy who wears a stupid mask and uses a name as lame as *Crimelord?*
If this Crimelord character really has the files--*and that's a pretty big if*--I figured he got them the same place we did.
You mean *Charlie Kurkle?*
I thought he was in jail.
Was.
Past tense.
I've been keeping an eye on him.
I applaud your initiative, Detective.
Heads up!
He's on the move again.
No problem.
I'll take the high road.
Hey, I don't remember inviting you along.
It was implied.

I don't know where *Kurkle* obtained the original disk.

There is a chance he copied it--

--or is working with the *Crimelord.*

Of course, it's also possible that *Drasco* is playing us both.

I track Charlie to a seedy hotel--

--then use my *spider-sense* to zero in.

I told you to leave me alone.

Don't be that way, Mona!

You're the only woman I've ever really loved.

I never should have let my work get between us.

Your *work?*

Charlie, you're a *thief...* and a bad one at that.

Give me another chance, Mona.

I'll do anything you ask.

You always say that, Charlie.

But it's only a matter of time before you go back to your old ways.

Hoo-boy! Charlie and Mona almost sound like a topsy-turvy version of me and Gene.

Say...

I got the disk from Mona.

Maybe she's the one who's in league with *Crimelord.*

ARRRGH! I'm too cold and wet to deal with this soap opera now.

I need to get home before my parents wonder what happened to me.

Is my little man ready for his big adventure?

Are you *sure* I can't come?

We asked.

The hospital only allows parents to stay with the younger patients.

Why spend an uncomfortable night in a waiting room when you can sleep in your own bed?

We'll see you bright and early tomorrow morning.

I kiss my parents goodbye and hug Benjy like there's no *tomorrow.*

As the door closes behind them, I pray there *will be.*

I'm already heading for my comforter when I hear someone at the door.

Could it be *Deadspot?*

Has she finally tracked me down?

Ready for a *girls' night IN?*

Davida and I figured you could use a little company.

Courtney wanted to hire a few male strippers.

I convinced her to go the *pizza* and *Cold Stone* route.

We also raided *Blockbuster* for a *Leonard Groote* DVD fest.

I... *uhhh...* thanks, guys!

You're the GREATEST!

PIZZA

Luigi's

Meanwhile, elsewhere...

Yes--?

BZZZZZ

I'm having trouble hearing you. I must be in a **dead spot.**

It's probably just my cheap, disposable phone.

I'll buy a new one tomorrow.

I trust you'll text me the number.

I like to keep my clients happy.

Unfortunately, I haven't completed our last contract.

I understand. Some assignments take time.

I have the utmost faith in your abilities. In fact, I even have a new job for you...

The girls leave around midnight.

They would have been happy to stay, but I'm supposed to rest.

Yeah, right!

A couple of hours tick by, followed by even slower ones.

That's when I notice the rain has finally stopped.

Y'know...

A little *exercise* might help me relax.

Yeah.

That's the ticket.

Exercise!

I simply ride my webs, enjoying the crisp morning air--

--and the silence of the sleeping city.

I assume even *Detective Drasco* is home in bed--

--and decide to find out where he lives, courtesy of the *spider-tracer* I planted earlier.

CLOSED

Instead of the rundown Manhattan tenement I'm expecting, it leads me to an old movie theater in Brooklyn--

--which seems to be drawing a rather distinctive crowd.

This must be the *Crimelord's* auction.

CLOSED

Is Drasco here because someone tipped him?

Or because he's the--*UH-OH!*

KWOOM!

KRAKA-BOOM!

Isn't this past your bedtime?

I suppose it doesn't really matter.

You're about to sleep for ETERNITY!

HOBGOBLIN!

Just listen to that *thunder* outside.

Please take whatever seats you want. There are plenty up front.

The auction will begin soon.

Looks like we drew a pretty good crowd, chief.

Are you kidding, Dante?

This is the crème of the underworld elite.

"That's the Deadly *Delilah*. She rules most of the upper East Side.

"And *Fancy Dan* gets a piece of all the Brooklyn action."

"*Cornell Cottonmouth* controls the Bronx.

"*Man-Mountain Marko* keeps the lower West Side in line.

"You'd better get into position, Dante...just in case anyone tries something stupid."

Dumb!

Dumb!

DUMB!

A super-battle is the last thing I intended.

I can't risk injury.

Not when Benjy's counting on me.

Did I do something to offend you, Spider-Girl?

You're not as witty or gregarious as usual.

I hope you're not coming down with the flu.

You're a prime candidate.

I doubt that costume offers much protection, the way the weather's been.

You could catch your *death.*

I can't let him goad me into fighting back.

I need to put a little distance between us--

--so that I can pop out my cell phone and clue in the cops.

You and I have something in common tonight.

This auction was by invitation only--

--and we're both *party crashers.*

Of course, I prefer to think the *Crimelord* just didn't have my current address.

Oh, no!

NO!

There are times--

--when I am just so thankful--

--to have *spider-like* agility.

Nice recovery.

A pity I anticipated that maneuver.

I hope you appreciate the irony of these new *goblin grenades.*

I based them on the *impact webbing* you once employed against me.

Naturally, I *improved* the design.

The material I am offering contains a full blueprint of the criminal organization once run by *Wilson Fisk*, the self-proclaimed *Kingpin of Crime*.

I assume everyone in this room had dealings with him at one point or another.

The man was quite formidable, in every sense of the word.

His *legacy* could be the start of your new *dynasty*.

I've heard enough *hype*, Crimelord.

I bid one SPIDER-GIRL!

Unless some-one has a couple of *Avengers* or members of the *Fantastic Five* handy--

I WIN!

#18

MY ALLY, MY ENEMY!

My name is *May "Mayday" Parker* and I am the daughter of *Spider-Man.*

I'm also in another fine *mess.*

How could I have been so stupid?

So careless?

My baby brother needs me.

Benjy is about to undergo surgery for a *hearing loss--*

--that I accidentally *caused!*

Instead of being with him at the hospital, I went web-swinging--

--engaged in a brainless super-battle--

--and got myself trapped in this pile of super-goo.

And now the *Hobgoblin* intends to use me as a *bargaining chip* to obtain the legendary *Fisk Files.*

I'm *warning* you, *Hobgoblin!*

Stop disrupting my auction.

You weren't invited for a reason.

You have no right to be here.

Right?

RIGHT?!?

Don't talk to me about what's *right*, *Crimelord.*

I'm a super-villain.

I don't do *right.*

Besides, if you want to get technical, the files *rightfully* belong to *me.*

I first discovered that *Wilson Fisk* left a detailed record of his criminal organization months ago.

How nice for you!

Too bad they're in *my* possession.

However, I am willing to part with them... *for the right price!*

Hey! This was supposed to be an open auction.

Yeah, we all brought enough cash to cover a 10% down payment.

Hoo-boy! As if I didn't have enough problems, I'm trapped in a room full of angry mob bosses--

--and it looks like a shooting war is about to erupt.

What's wrong with me?

Why do I always end up in situations like this?

Stop wasting time, Crimelord!

Give me the files or I'll start separating you from your limbs.

The other bidders are going to be very disappointed.

Their problem.

Not mine.

Yes, quite right...

"Your *major* concern--"

BKOW!

PKOOM!

You under-estimated me, Hobgoblin.

I hope to reap millions from this auction so I took precautions.

You shouldn't have tried to cut us out of the action, Goblin.

There's supposed to be *honor* among crime bosses.

You crossed a line, pal.

Mindworm!

It's time.

Yeah, gotta agree.

--is headed right up your TAILPIPE!

What the--?!

Uh-oh!

This is so not good.

So very not good!

You're not the only one who takes precautions, Crimelord.

My associate--the *Mindworm*--has this uncanny ability to exploit emotions and manipulate perceptions.

For the past few weeks, he's been secretly using this talent to mentally ensnare all the other underworld chieftains--

--and they now serve ME!

Actually...

...me.

What--?

I'll explain as soon as I take my rightful place on the stage.

Up until recently, I've always been content to be a background kind of guy.

A flunky who obeys orders.

No more!

I figure I could use the former Kingpin's files as well as the next guy.

Y-you're *betraying* me?

Why not? It's not like you ever really trusted me.

You don't trust *anyone.*

Since I'm the guy with the *power*--

--I deserve to be in charge.

Oh, man!

Oh, man!

What *else* could possibly go wrong?

There's absolutely *nothing* to worry about.

MIDTOWN MEDICAL CENTER

Your son is going to get the very best care.

We're counting on you, doc.

Be brave, Benjamin!

May was supposed to be here by now, Peter.

What could be keeping her?

You know our daughter, Mary Jane. She's never on time.

I'll just give her a call.

OPERATING THEATRE

ZEEEEEEE

ZEEEEEEE

Oh, no!

NO!

It's Dad.

Probably wants to know what's keeping me.

How do I explain that I can't join him and Mom--

--because I'm being held prisoner by a room full of criminals?

No sense signaling your man in the projection booth, Crimelord.

He's already mine.

I'll make you a deal.

Hand over the files without any fuss and I won't mess with your mind.

What choice do I have?

None.

Yak! Yak! Yak!

What's with all the talking?

Are you two *politicians* or *super-villains*?

Will someone at least try to *act* like a costumed bad guy--

BOOMPH!

--and eliminate the *wall-crawler* in the corner?

SSSSSSSSSS

W-why did you do that, Hobgoblin?

I had *plans* for that girl.

Enough! You're much too dangerous to keep around.

Will someone please KILL that idiot for me?

Sorry.

Can't let that happen, Big Dome.

We wall-crawlers have a thing about people dying on our watch.

And that even includes pond scum like the *Hobgoblin.*

I can guess why you freed me.

Pretty clever...even if I do say so myself.

Now Mindworm has to split his concentration.

You think I'm not strong enough?

Wrong!

KILL THEM BOTH!

Uhhh...

You got a Plan B?

Of course...

We FIGHT like our lives depended on it.

Good plan.

I may be a little off my game, but I'm betting my footwork is still fast enough to flatten--

=UFFFT=

THWIPP!

Whatever happens, I can't let the *Hobgoblin* or the *Crimelord* escape with the *Fisk Files.*

I had those files in my hands a few months ago.

Since I turned them over to *Detective Drasco*, I have to assume he's somehow connected to the *Crimelord.*

Although *Charlie Kurkle* was the original owner and he might have copied them before--

Earth to Spider-Girl!

SWAK!

You really need to concentrate when you're trading fists with *Man Mountain Marko.*

That's no way to treat my favorite lady, Marko.

Her preferences run more towards zap blasts and goblin grenades.

KA-ZAK!

Nooo!

Please don't tell me the Hobgoblin just saved me!

Meanwhile...

Diner

Morning, Davida.

I was kind of surprised to hear from you last night.

What's so important that we had to meet for breakfast?

You and I have to talk, Wes.

Uh-oh!

Conversations that begin like that rarely end well.

Although we haven't gone out long enough for a breakup speech.

You're right. You have to be a couple before you can break up.

We may have hung out together, but we never really dated.

How could we--

--when you're completely into my best friend?

Wha--?!

Admit it, Wes. You're crazy about Mayday.

Everyone knows it.

Except, maybe, *May* herself.

Heck, I only asked you out to force her hand.

Look, buster, time's a'wasting. *Gene Thompson* is trying to get back with her.

If you want her, you need to act fast.

You can find her at the *Midtown Medical Center.*

Whoa!

She's in the hospital?

Her brother's having an operation.

May could really use a shoulder to lean on, Wes.

You man enough to supply it?

And, back in *Brooklyn*...

Take her, Cottonmouth!

Little witch gonna learn how I got my name.

=whew= Smells more like *trench mouth* to me.

ZEEEEEEE

Errrr... excuse me.

I really need to take this call.

Hey, Dad!

Sorry I couldn't answer earlier. I was a little tied up.

How's Benjy?

He's still in surgery.

We're waiting for news.

What's that ruckus I'm hearing?

TWAMM!

Just an old shoot'em up on TV.

I'll join you ASAP.

Bye.

I've been in enough battles to recognize the real thing.

My daughter's in trouble.

Maybe I should race back home, unpack my old costume and--

EXIT

No!

My place is here...with *Mary Jane* and *Ben*.

I need to believe in *May*.

She's the web-slinger now.

This is *her* time...

"Go get'em Tiger!"

THWIPP!

Looks like I've finally cleared a path to you, Chrome Dome.

I believe I still owe you a few lumps.

You're really starting to annoy me, girl.

My job would be so much easier if I could just control your mind.

But...*noooo!* You had go shatter our psychic link during our last meeting and make that impossible.

This is on your head...

KILL HER!

KILL HER!

KILL HER!

KILL HER!

No *kill* for you--

--and this should snap the *off switch* on your army of zombies.

THOOMP!

Well done, Spider-Girl.

But I could still use a little help.

These guys still don't like me.

WHOOOMPH!
NYPD!
NYPD!
Weapons down.
Hands up.
HOO-HA!
Welcome to the party, Captain Ruiz!
No! This can't be happening--!
BAMPH!
All my plans ruined.
My money-- GONE!
What the--?!
Who's chasing Crimelord?
Ohmigosh! I recognize that silhouette--!
Should I help the police secure Hobgoblin and the other--No!
I'm needed elsewhere.
Freeze, Spider-Girl!
This is now a police action.
Holster that weapon, Officer!
She knows what she's doing.
POLICE

HUFF!
HUFF!
HUFF!
HUFF!
HUFF!
HUFF!
That's far enough, Crimelord.
Talk about a *lame* name.
Those files you tried to auction actually belong to me.
I stole 'em first.
Ch-Charlie--?!?
You know me?
Of course.
Listen, I can explain everything.
But we've got to get out of here.
WE--?! What do you mean "we"?
Why should I--
GAHHHH
Hi there.
I'm *Deadspot*, the invisible assassin.
I doubt you've ever heard of me, but--*and I say this with all modesty*--I'm very good at my job.
Pay attention now because I hate to repeat myself...
Surrender the files if you want to live.

Ch-Charlie--?!

What have I done?

Focus, pal.

You need a *Ouija Board* to talk to him now.

Please don't die on me, Charlie.

I...I need you.

Love you.

M-Mona--?!?

Oooookay!

Officially bored now.

Can we *please* get back to the *Fisk Files*?

SPWA-THAKK!

FILES?!

This man could be seriously hurt and *that's* all you care about?

Hey! You ought to be thankful I'm after *them* now.

My principal suspended your contract and reassigned me to this gig.

Where's the love?

Awwww, forget it! I can tell you're about to get all righteous and indignant on me.

Killing is what I do, lady.

Get over it!

The whole *kicking* and *punching* thing...*not* so much.

See ya!

I glance quickly at *Kurkle.*

From the way Mona's cuddling and whispering to him, I assume he's still conscious.

Then I begin to concentrate.

I can't let a psychopath like *Deadspot* escape.

I just can't.

I'll never be safe while she's free.

Nor will anyone else.

THWIPP!

THWIPP!

My *spider-sense* easily zeroes in on her.

Nice trick, sweetie.

Don't know how you managed to find me.

Don't really care.

ZZT

Not when I can do *this!*

Yeah, that magnetic power pack sure comes in handy.

Bet you'd hate to *lose* it.

What--?!

I'm just *saying...*

Must be terrible to be so dependent on the one gizmo.

WAMM!

Me, I've got a host of powers--

--and I was born with 'em.

Just between us girls, I'm curious...

Who hired you to whack me?

Was it the *Black Tarantula?*

The *Hobgoblin?*

Or *none* of the above?

SWAT!

KWAK!

WHO was it?

TELL ME!

KWA-TWUDD!

KKKKZZ ZZZZZ UUUUU

Okay, be that way.

I guess it doesn't really matter.

Your killing days are OVER!

I leave Deadspot in the custody of a pair of arriving cops and then look in on Kurkle.

I blew it, Charlie.

Thought I could use everything you told me about those horrible files to pull off the biggest con of my career.

That's when it suddenly hits me--

--*Mona* is the only one talking.

There never were any files, baby.

I was just going to collect the down payment and disappear.

I could easily buy a new life with 10% of a few million.

But all I really needed was *you.*

You were the only man who ever truly *got* me.

You were my one shot at true happiness--

--and I let you slip away.

I never should have *quit* on us.

You have to come with us, ma'am.

Never thought the Crimelord would turn out to be Mona.

Once a grifter...

By the way, I called in the cavalry as soon as Hobgoblin dropped you on the stage.

Thanks, Drasco.

Sorry I doubted you...

Yeah...*well*... can't say I blame you. *Forget it!* We're cool.

You done *good* today.

EMS

I assume you rounded up all the bad guys.

For all the good it'll do. Most of 'em will be out on bail before I've finished my paperwork.

Unfortunately, the *Hobgoblin* got away.

Busted out of a police van and hospitalized six good men before he split.

What about *Mindworm?*

"Funny thing about him. One minute he's stretched out on that stage and then... *poof*"

CLOSED

"It's like he was never there."

You betrayed me, Mindworm.

I am *very* disappointed in you.

I-it was a momentary lapse, Hobgoblin.

Honest!

I don't know what came over me.

I didn't mean anything personal by it.

Silly me.

That's *exactly* how I took it.

I mean, you did shout *"Kill him!"* quite a few times.

Luckily, I'm always prepared for treachery.

I secretly planted a subcutaneous bomb at the base of your neck the first time we embraced.

Wait!

We can make a deal.

I can trade for my life.

I know Spider-Girl's secret identity.

Learned it while we were psychically linked.

You let me go and--

YEEEEAGGH!

Nice try.

Like I'd ever believe you again.

You've caused me a major setback, Mindworm.

Ruined my plans to seize control of the underworld from the *Black Tarantula.*

The local crime bosses all hate me now--

Probably want me dead.

A sabbatical may be necessary for awhile.

The Caribbean is lovely this time of year.

But I will eventually return.

You haven't seen the last of *Hobgoblin.*

Twenty minutes later, I finally manage to drag myself to the *Midtown Medical Center.*

I...I'm sorry I'm late.

MIDTOWN MEDICAL CENTER

You must have had a terrible night, sweetheart.

You look exhausted.

Yeah, I... I didn't get much sleep.

Over here, May. This should help a little.

mr. caff

I messed up, Dad.

Real bad.

I've been there.

Comes with the costume.

We'll get over it.

We're just lucky your brother didn't need a transfusion.

He thinks I feel bad about ditching the hospital. I do. But my real guilt is about *Kurkle.* I let him die on my watch.

I screw up my courage and am just about to blurt out the truth, to confide in Dad and beg for advice when...

Peter. May. The doctor is here.

And I have *good news,* Mrs. Parker.

The operation was a complete success.

Only time will tell how young *Benjamin* responds to the surgery--

--but there is a good chance we have restored *most,* if not all, of his hearing.

That's when the tears begin to flow...

Tears of *joy...*

Relief...

And more than a little *guilt.*

Amid the swirl of hugs, kisses and congratulations, I keep wondering *what if...*

What if I hadn't chased Deadspot?

What if I had performed CPR on Kurkle?

What if I had taken him to the paramedics?

Hello, Miss Parker.

Hope I'm not intruding.

Davida told me about your brother and I just stopped by to see how he's doing.

Wes?

Uhhhh... Benjy's fine.

He's just perfect.

It's so sweet of you to visit and--

I figured you could use a friendly face.

You want to head down to the cafeteria and get something to eat, May?

May?

You *okay*, May?

No, I'm way better than *okay* now.

Gene!

You came--!

Of course!

I come through for my girl.

Yeah.

You always do.

You actually *get* me.

I never should have *quit* on us.

If you give me another chance--

--I'll do *whatever* it takes to make our relationship work.

Really--?!

THE END... FOR NOW!

COVER INKS BY RON FRENZ

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MEET MAY "MAYDAY" PARKER, THE DAUGHTER OF SPIDER-MAN!

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